

My name is Stephen Walter, [REDACTED] Chestnut Ridge Court, N. Potomac, MD and I also work at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, MD. Brookside Gardens is a 50-acre public display garden. We as everyone else knew of this legislation coming well in advance and began purchasing battery powered leaf blowers last year. The electric blowers have limits, but so do the gas powered blowers. We get approximately two hours of blowing per set of batteries. We solve this problem by buying extra batteries for each blower and having multiple blowers. With gas we had similar issues, having to deal with carrying extra fuel cans and dealing with two-cycle oil for the small engines. I have had many visitors thanking me for now having quieter electric leaf blowers. I even had one visitor that was an audiologist who had an app on her phone that measured sound level. My electric leaf blower was putting out around 70 db, where the gas leaf blowers put out 95 -100 db. Also keep in mind that db is calculated on a logarithmic scale not a linear scale, so a 20+ db difference is worse than it seems. She actually thanked me for the public service I was providing protecting visitors hearing. I feel this 3-year extension is unwarranted and maybe, if you really want to be kind, a one year extension is certainly doable. Also at Brookside Gardens, we have all the gardens put to bed for the winter by the end of November, I don't see why landscapers can not be done by then also. We do not have a large staff, so that can not be the reason why we are done by the end of November. I do admit this transition does require some guidance and that should be provided by the county. That guidance would include what commercial battery powered leaf blowers are the best. The hardest part is establishing a recharging station at the home base. I saw an excellent example of a recharging station at Home Depot Aspen Hill tool rental department. As we now know, many tools are battery-powered and they have done an excellent job of setting up a recharging station.

In addition to the noise of the 2-cycle engines, they are very polluting. These engines have no pollution control on the exhaust. The builders of these engines justify this by the loss of power and the additional cost of such equipment. I also feel this is a poor excuse for polluting the environment. We made the decision to protect the environment and people's hearing; please don't give in to this last-minute plea of hardship. I am sorry I cannot be there in person, but I need to be in the garden taking care of the plants.