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Montgomery County Council
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Testimony: Expedited Bill 19-25 Noise Control – Leaf Removal Equipment – Seasonal Exemption.

Council President Stewart and Members of the Montgomery County Council:

County Expedited Bill 19-25 proposes a three-year exemption, beyond the original one-year transition period, for professional landscapers from using non-gas-powered leaf blowers during the October–December season. While the exemption aims to smooth the transition, Takoma Park does not support an extended or additional exemption period. This position aligns with the City’s goals of promptly reducing noise, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Takoma Park’s own ordinance, developed to mirror the County’s original legislation, prohibits the use of gas-powered leaf blowers for both residents and landscapers with a year-long transition period. The City has strongly supported the County’s law and rebate program, helping landscapers and others adjust to these new requirements.

Allowing a three-year exemption risks creating confusion and inconsistent standards within Takoma Park, where the local ordinance is already in effect. Divergent timelines could result in two sets of rules, complicating enforcement and clear communication to residents and service providers. Furthermore, the bill’s definition of “landscaper” may exclude individuals who perform landscaping work but do not formally operate a company, potentially leaving those with the least resources unable to access necessary support.

Instead of providing any exemption, the City urges the Council to expand rebates and technical assistance to support all landscapers to comply, including purchase of extra batteries if needed. Creative solutions—such as temporary charging options or portable solar panels—could further ease the transition and ensure equitable access to compliant equipment.

In summary, Takoma Park respectfully opposes any exemption period and urges a focus on increased support, including more robust rebates and technical assistance. This approach will better serve residents, uphold community priorities, and ensure a fair, effective move toward quieter and cleaner landscaping practices.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.