

Chris O'Brien

From: Liz Mellen <ejmellen9@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 1, 2024 11:26 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Cc: Rep. Lombardi, John J.
Subject: Written testimony for H7495

Dear Committee and Representative Lombardi,

My name is Elizabeth Mellen. I am a Providence resident, Brown University employee, and a life-long resident of Rhode Island. **I am writing in strong support of H7495.**

As has been mentioned in previous testimony, despite fully electric landscaping businesses thriving in our neighboring states, commercial landscaping in Rhode Island still runs entirely on fossil fuels. As a state that claims to value the environment and its residents, this is completely unacceptable. A change is long overdue.

In 2020, lawn and garden equipment in Rhode Island produced an estimated 72,640 tons of carbon dioxide, 58 tons of fine particulates, and 182 tons of nitrogen oxides -- all of which could have been prevented. Brown University has committed to cutting its greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2040, with a 75% reduction by 2025. One of the University's first steps was transitioning from fossil fuel powered grounds equipment to electric-based equipment. There is absolutely no reason that the state of Rhode Island shouldn't and can't follow suit.

As a person who loves being outdoors, even in the city, I find joy in walking through our parks and simply having my windows open. However, these things are incredibly hard to enjoy when there are people aimlessly walking around blowing dirt and trash from sidewalks or parking lots into the streets, onto neighboring properties, and into peoples' windows. This high-powered movement of debris (very rarely leaves where I live) is unnecessary and incredibly damaging to everyone in the vicinity in regards to noise and air pollution.

It is time for a change and it is time for Rhode Island to follow the lead of other states who have begun to take action to reverse the damage that's been done to our air and water. RI H7495 is part of this solution and will allow for both our environment and landscaping businesses to thrive.

Thank you,
Elizabeth Mellen