

## Chris O'Brien

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**From:** Tony Morettini <tmorettini@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 28, 2024 1:11 PM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Subject:** H7495

Honorable Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing in support of H7495 (Boylan), a Bill establishing a \$350,000 fund for a pilot project to provide commercial landscapers with rebates to turn in their gas powered leaf blowers for zero emission battery powered ones. This Bill also provides for an education program for the landscapers on the benefits of swapping gas for electric lawn maintenance equipment.

A few years ago, the Bristol Conservation Commission, of which I'm Chair, worked with a Roger Williams University class to look at the pros and cons of gasoline powered leaf blowers. The conclusions were startling. Gas leaf blowers are very loud (95+ decibels - loud enough to cause permanent hearing loss), intrusive (the frequency at which they produce sound allows that sound to travel long distances - up to 800 feet - and penetrate the walls of homes), and horrifically air polluting (a Massachusetts study a few years ago found the leaf blowers in that state produced the equivalent of 135,000 cars worth of particulate matter and harmful gases per year - [https://publicinterestnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Lawn Care Goes Electric Oct23.pdf](https://publicinterestnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Lawn_Care_Goes_Electric_Oct23.pdf)).

Happily, there is a reasonable alternative - battery powered electric blowers. They are quieter (65 dB), and produce zero emissions. And they now are as powerful as commercial grade gas blowers. The state of California has joined Washington, DC, Miami, Florida, and many other smaller cities and towns, in enacting total bans on gas powered blowers, in favor of electric. The ROI for the landscaper in saved gas costs is short, and "all electric" has become an attractive business model for landscapers in a climate conscious time.

In sum, switching from gas to battery leaf blowers (and associated lawn maintenance equipment) makes sense in many environmental ways, and this pilot can demonstrate that it's an economically viable alternative for commercial landscapers. The \$1500 per rebate is more than enough to purchase a high end blower, with a couple batteries, providing plenty of opportunity for a landscaper to prove the technology. For all these reasons, I ask that you pass H7495 out of Committee, and out to the full House for a vote.

Thank you,

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