

Dear Ms Huntley:

Please convey my opinion to the House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing.

The nation-wide efforts to regulate the use of gas powered leaf blowers is well grounded in scientific research. Gas powered leaf blowers, like other two stroke engines, emit an enormous amount of toxic gasses, including carbon dioxide, contributing both to respiratory disease and climate change. According to the California Air Resources Board, operating a gas leaf blower for one hour releases emissions equivalent to driving a car for 1,100 miles. Federal regulations limit permissible levels of emissions from cars. There are no emissions regulations for leaf blowers.

The gas powered leaf blowers emit approximately 40 percent more noise (around 70 decibels) than the 50 dB for daytime noise recommended by the World Health Organization. The noise is tremendously annoying to residents - many of the people I know wear ear plugs when leaf blowers are operating nearby. But the people most seriously affected are the workers operating the machines who are exposed the the noise for long durations.

There are outright bans on the use of gas powered leaf blowers in many parts of the country and many municipalities in Massachusetts and New York have introduced bans during many months of the year, offered incentives to lawn care companies to exchange electric for gas powered leaf blowers, and limited the maximum number of decibels that can be emitted. There are a number of Lawn Care services already operating in RI that use electric equipment exclusively, evidence that the industry should be able to adapt.

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