

February 2, 2026

Dear Chair Casey, First Vice Chair Fogarty, Second Vice Chair Speakman, and Members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee,

I am writing to provide you with my comments regarding House Bill No. H7150 to amend Chapter 45-2 of the General Laws entitled "General Powers" 45-2-71 as it pertains to regulation of powered landscape equipment.

Let me first state that I vehemently oppose this bill and urge you to vote against it.

My reasons for opposing this are as follows.

This bill is an example of extreme overreach and not for the good. At a time when we are facing an ever-increasing and ever-challenging climate crisis, this bill is an affront to trying to do whatever we can to address this issue on a local basis and is clearly in disagreement with the mandates of the RI Act on Climate legislation, as well as attempts to address health-related issues arising from the usage of such equipment.

Lawn care shouldn't pollute the air or contribute to warming the Earth!

Gas-powered leaf blowers, for example, emit 23 times more carbon monoxide and 300 times more non-methane hydrocarbons than a typical older model car.¹

Because the combustion process of the two-stroke engine is so inefficient, more than 30 percent of that fuel is released unburnt as an aerosol of toxic fumes.¹

Lawn and garden equipment powered by gasoline and other fossil fuels released more than 30 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere in 2020 – more than all the greenhouse emissions from the city of Los Angeles.²

In addition to contributing to the climate crisis, there is also risk from the dust that two-stroke engines stir up – pollen, mold, animal feces, chemicals from herbicides and pesticides, and road dust laden with toxic particles from rubber tires. This means an increased risk of asthma, lung cancer, and cardiovascular disease.¹

In terms of noise, for workers who use their machines for hours every day, the risks can be dangerous. The most powerful gas-powered leaf blowers can produce air that exceeds 200

¹ Scott Smith, "What's Fueling the Growing Movement to Ban Gas-powered BLOWERS", Friends of Animals ACTION LINE, Spring 2024, 32.

² U.S. Public Interest Research Groups Education Fund (PIRG), Fall, 2023.

mph and sounds as high as 112 decibels. Exposure to sounds over 110 decibels can cause permanent hearing loss in just one minute, reports the Total Hearing Care website.¹

Many electric leaf blowers now offer power on a par with gas models, advises *Consumer Reports*. They are quieter and greener. Battery life is steadily improving, and commercial landscapers are adapting by simply having more batteries on hand, just as the tank of a two-stroke blower using a gas-oil mix needs frequent refilling.¹

Lawn care doesn't have to pollute the air or deafen our ears! Oh, the relentless noise!!!

Much of what goes on out there with leaf-blowing equipment is simply overkill, unnecessary, and continues our unintended onslaught on biodiversity which we need to sustain all of us. At some point society will get past the presumed need to have perfectly manicured and leaf-less lawns - and dust-free driveways and sidewalks - and stop the destruction of the habitat – the leaves on our lawns - that we need for overwintering insects that help to keep pests down, provide food for birds and other wildlife, and increase pollination in our gardens.

Again, I oppose H 7150 and urge you to vote against it. While I believe that there needs to be some period of phase-out/transition for usage of such equipment, as well as some extent of monetary support to help businesses make the switch, the sooner that this occurs the better. We don't need legislation that makes it harder to address these issues.

Sincerely,

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