

February 2, 2026

George Voutes, 17 Shore Road, Bristol RI, 02809

To: RI House Municipal Government and Housing Committee

Dear Chair Casey and Members of the Committee,

I oppose H 7150 for its shameful disregard to the health, safety and wellbeing of RI residents, landscape workers, wildlife, and the natural world. H 7150 is a blatant special interest attempt to strip away rights of every city, town, and municipality in RI from making their own decisions on the type of landscaping equipment allowed in its local community.

As you are likely aware, the City of Providence recently enacted a new ordinance that restricts and eventually forbids gas-powered leaf blowers. Many other cities, towns and villages across RI are considering actions to restrict gas-powered leaf blowers and help reduce the egregiously harmful effects these machines cause to humans and the natural world. Hundreds of cities and town across the country have instituted restrictions and laws against gas-powered leaf blower usage. Such restrictions are accelerating across the country; not because of special interest groups trying to obstruct cities, towns and municipalities' right to choose, but because of the overwhelming majority of local residents who are demanding restricting and removing these horrific gas-powered leaf blowers from their communities.

Our RI towns and neighborhoods have been turned into industrial work zones through gas-powered landscaping equipment, mainly 2-stroke engine gas-powered leaf blowers, string trimmers and hedge trimmers. Seven days a week the industrial onslaught of gas-powered landscaping equipment goes on now. From early morning to dark. From before the first winter thaw until Christmas - it goes on and on and on. These days gas-powered leaf blowers are even used to clear snow (really) when a shovel and broom would suffice. The situation is so out of control and clearly favors landscape company interests (using gas-powered equipment) over the wellbeing and best interests of the communities it claims to serve. H 7150 is attempting to codify the perpetual usage of the gas-powered landscaping equipment into law, and with it, perpetuating the hell realm that exists today caused by gas-powered landscaping equipment.

Wanting basic peace, clean air, and reasonable noise levels in our neighborhoods does not mean people must uproot their lives and move to the countryside. It means our cities, towns, and municipalities can function like a community service (free to choose their own ordinances), not like industrial work zones that place special interest groups ahead of

taxpaying residents, landscape workers, wildlife and the natural world. If your business depends on disturbing and harming the people around you, the problem isn't the neighbors or communities. The problem is with your business model and the type of equipment (gas-powered 2-cycle engines machines in this case) that you "choose" to deploy.

The time is way overdue to rebalance our neighborhoods and communities from the dangerous noise and toxic pollution emitted from gas-powered landscaping equipment. The decision on how best to achieve this must continue to be handled by city, town, and municipal governments; not the State of RI, dictated by special interest groups. Local governments understand the unique needs of their communities and are best positioned to protecting the health and wellbeing of their residents, while transitioning towards much needed sustainable practices

Please do not advance H 7150. It is not in the interests of your constituents, the residents of Rhode Island and the natural world we all rely on.

Attached are testimonies from medical professionals on the dangers of gas-powered landscaping equipment.

Thank you.

*George Voutes*

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