

Testimony in Opposition to Bill S 3029: AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES --

GENERAL POWERS

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To Chairman Bissaillon and members of the Senate Housing and Municipal Government Committee:

I oppose S 3029 for its complete disregard to the health, safety and wellbeing of RI residents, landscape workers, wildlife, and the natural world. S 3029 is a blatant attempt to strip away the rights of every city, town, and municipality in RI from making its own decisions on the type of landscaping equipment allowed in its community. Local governments don't need the state telling them what landscaping equipment is allowed in their communities. That should be (and is) up to the residents of the community in collaboration with their local municipal governments. Requiring a positive referendum vote on municipalities right to choose places an egregious heavy handed state government restriction on our cities and town. This is state government overreach full stop and the legality of this restriction would be challenged in court.

As you are likely aware, the City of Providence recently enacted a new ordinance that restricts and eventually forbids gas-powered leaf blowers citywide. 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 gas-powered leaf blowers and 2-stroke gas powered landscaping equipment from their communities.

Our RI towns, neighborhoods and landscapes 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 self-interests and its gas-powered equipment), over the wellbeing of the communities it claims to serve. S 3029 attempts 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. Please review the attached documents from medical professionals on the inherent dangers of 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 (free to choose), 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 equipment (with gas-powered 2-cycle engines) that you "choose" to use.**

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. Local governments understand the unique needs of their communities and are best positioned to protecting the health, wellbeing, and right to live in their homes and neighborhoods without the unbridled noise and toxic emissions emitted from landscaper gas powered equipment.

Please do not advance S 3029. It is not in the interests of your constituents, the residents, or the natural world across Rhode Island.

Below are a few interesting testimonies from battery electric landscapers. Also, attached are relevant documents from medical professionals on the dangers of gas-powered landscaping equipment.

Thank you.

George Voutes

Testimony from Doug Downing of Advanced Environmental Lawn Services, Lower Merion PA, starts at 2:32:04

<https://www.youtube.com/live/phsKxv42-Jc?t=8927s>

Doug is the owner of advanced environmental lawn service. He's been all electric for many years. He maintains residential, commercial and government accounts up to 15 acres. The

cost of entry is a little more expensive than gas. That's because he's buying the equivalent of fuel up front at the time of purchasing the electric equipment. The power of battery electric equipment is equal to or better than gas. He uses a strong 1145 CFM backpack blower. The weight of the equipment is similar to gas powered equipment. His runtime is shorter than gas powered, but he charges batteries in the field during the day, which gets swapped out during in each machine during the day and is very efficient. Batteries charge very fast, and he only needs 2-3 battery sets per crew. He is all electric for every part of his business. Customers love the service. Customers think the service is very quiet and he is doing this service even for large properties. His business is profitable. His return on investment is 1.5 years. Employees also love battery electric equipment. No smell, less vibration, very easy to use, and virtually no maintenance.

Testimony from Dan Delventhal (owner) of Mow Green in Bridgeport CT

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZu21NAjAA0>

Moe Green landscaping. Based in Bridgeport, Connecticut, services approximately 60 acres weekly using all battery powered leaf blowers. His prices are very competitive and the same as gas powered service. The technology is here NOW! Our battery blowers are very strong and enough to do any property year-round. He currently uses 800 CFM blowers, but there's also new models with 900 to 1100 CFM. The issue that battery leaf blowers are not up for the task is a mute-point. It's not true. Gas power likely exceeds local noise ordinance. Battery electric equipment is not an issue. Fast chargers and spare batteries keep us running all day long. My crews spend less time switching batteries than refueling with gas. You don't need two dozen batteries per blower. Hundreds of landscapers have found it very profitable to use battery electric leaf blowers. The argument based on power, weight, batteries, recycling, fires are all yesterday's arguments. People focus on the perceived higher upfront costs, but ignore the lower total cost of ownership (TCO) over time, which is always better for battery powered blowers. Savings from electric equipment begins on day one. No more maintenance and less down time. Our experience with battery longevity is between 3-8 years of life. Recycling batteries can be done at big box stores or at solid waste facilities. Our business is thriving. Clients who used to use gas contractors are happy with our service, even the squeaky-clean clients that want their lawn manicured are happy. Public health benefits are important, and the industry will figure out how to deal with a battery electric landscaping world. We always have!

Serenity Lawn Care testimony, Huntington NY

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1351rCrxxjNEG0j71NILL0dptrCuXn8T5/view>

Serenity lawn care, Huntington NY. Kevin Boudram founder. 5 years of battery electric lawn care experience. Approximately 60 accounts per week serviced. Price, power, performance are more than enough to replace gas landscaping services. He uses commercial grade mowers, which cost approximately \$1800. Uses 800 CFM Works backpack blowers, which cost approximately \$350 each, versus a Stihl gas blower BR800 which is approximately \$650 each. He uses approximately \$35 a month to charge all of his equipment. Savings from not buying gas allows us to purchase sufficient batteries to go a full day without having to charge in the field. Services all 60 properties a week - in addition to hedge trimming services - with no battery issues. Power is not an issue with battery electric equipment. We cut grass up to three feet high with battery electric equipment. Lifespan of electric equipment is good. Three years is a minimum that we have seen with our equipment and even when it doesn't work as designed, the equipment manufacturers help us out with needed replacements - often for free - and battery electric technology has great warranties. Power and runtime are not issues with operating our battery electric business. What we need to do is work together between industry and government to decrease noise and pollution.