

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 701 (Delegate Foley, *et al.*)

Economic Matters and Health and
Government Operations

**Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers - Purchase, Use, and Sale - Prohibitions (Clean
Air Quiet Communities Act)**

This bill, subject to specified exceptions, establishes various prohibitions related to the purchase, sale, and use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers in the State. Generally, the bill (1) prohibits, beginning July 1, 2025, the State from purchasing a gasoline-powered leaf blower; (2) phases out the use of a gasoline-powered leaf blower by the State and its contractors and subcontractors by January 1, 2030, as specified; and (3) prohibits a person, beginning January 1, 2027, from selling or offering for sale a gasoline-powered leaf blower in the State. The bill establishes related notice requirements. It also establishes (1) a provision relating to the authority of local governments to enact standards relating to gasoline-powered leaf blowers and (2) a requirement for the State and its contractors and subcontractors to comply with local standards that are at least as stringent as the bill's standards when managing State property. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: State expenditures (all/multiple funds) increase, potentially significantly for some agencies, beginning in FY 2026, as discussed below. Revenues are not directly affected.

Local Effect: No impact through FY 2027. Potential significant increase in local expenditures beginning in FY 2028, as discussed below. Local revenues are not anticipated to be significantly affected.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Bill Summary: “Gasoline-powered leaf blower” means a combustion engine-powered handheld, backpack, or walk-behind leaf or grass blower, vacuum, or leaf debris removal device. The term includes an electric leaf blower connected to a generator powered by gasoline or other fossil fuels; it does not include a stationary or tow-behind leaf vacuum, mulcher, debris loader device, or snow blower.

Prohibitions Relating to the Purchase and Use of Gasoline-powered Leaf Blowers by the State and Its Contractors and Subcontractors

In addition to the prohibition on the *purchase* of a gasoline-powered leaf blower by the State, which begins July 1, 2025, the State, or any contractor or subcontractor employed by the State, may not *use* a gasoline-powered leaf blower during the following time periods: (1) May 1, 2027, to October 1, 2027; (2) January 1, 2028, to October 1, 2028; and (3) January 1, 2029, to October 1, 2029. Beginning January 1, 2030, the State and its contractors and subcontractors are prohibited from using a gasoline-powered leaf blower.

Required Notice

Beginning September 1, 2025, any person that sells or offers for sale a gasoline-powered leaf blower in the State must notify the purchaser or potential purchaser that (1) a person is prohibited from purchasing a gasoline-powered leaf blower in the State beginning January 1, 2027 and (2) several jurisdictions in the State have established restrictions and prohibitions on the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers.

Statewide Prohibition on the Sale of Gasoline-powered Leaf Blowers

Beginning January 1, 2027, a person may not sell or offer for sale a gasoline-powered leaf blower in the State.

Applicability of the Bill

The bill’s provisions do not apply to (1) wildland fire suppression activities; (2) prescribed burn management activities; (3) fire-fighting activities carried out by authorized personnel; or (4) emergency response activities, as specified.

Local Authority and State Compliance with Local Standards

The bill does not affect the authority of a local government to enact its own standards that are at least as stringent as the standards under the bill or that begin on an earlier date than the dates established in the bill. Further, the State (or any contractor or subcontractor

employed by the State), must comply with local standards that are at least as stringent as the standards established in the bill when managing State property.

Current Law: State statute and regulations are silent with regard to leaf blowers, gasoline-powered or otherwise.

Noise Control

The bill's provisions are added to Title 3 ("Noise Control") of the Environment Article, which requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to adopt environmental noise standards, sound level limits, and noise control rules and regulations as necessary to protect the public health, the general welfare, and property. Chapter 360 of 2012 (House Bill 190) repealed a requirement under Title 3 that MDE enforce the sound level limits and noise control rules and regulations adopted under the title and authorized local governments to (1) adopt environmental noise standards, sound level limits, and noise control rules and regulations and (2) enforce sound level limits and noise control rules and regulations adopted under the title. MDE indicates that Chapter 360 [effectively transferred](#) noise enforcement authority to local governments.

MDE's regulations that establish environmental noise standards are expressly not applicable to lawn care and snow removal equipment (daytime only) when used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 (CSNA) (Chapter 38), among other things, requires the State to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 60% from 2006 levels by 2031.

Local Restrictions on the Use of Gasoline-powered Leaf Blowers

Several local jurisdictions in the State, including Montgomery County, Baltimore City, and the cities of Annapolis and Hyattsville, already ban the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers in their jurisdictions.

State Fiscal Effect: State expenditures (all/multiple funds) for several State agencies increase beginning in fiscal 2026 due to (1) costs associated with various State agencies' migration of their gasoline-powered leaf blowers to electrically powered alternatives, including higher upfront costs for the electrically powered alternatives compared to gasoline-powered leaf blowers and (2) increased costs for State agencies' landscaping contracts due to the need for State contractors and subcontractors to migrate to electrically powered leaf blowers under the bill.

Several State agencies provided estimates of the bill's impact that attempt to quantify costs, but the number of responses received by the Department of Legislative Services was limited, and several of the responses did not provide complete information regarding the potential fiscal effects of the bill. As such, a reliable estimate of the overall impact on State expenditures cannot be made at this time. However, based on information provided by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and several State institutions of higher education, expenditures for some State entities may increase significantly.

For example, DNR advises that its expenditures increase by at least \$207,000 in both fiscal 2026 and 2027 to purchase battery-operated blowers and batteries and by approximately \$83,000 annually thereafter for replacement equipment. DNR notes that other factors likely increase costs further but are difficult to quantify, including increased costs to hire contractors and subcontractors and purchase equipment for future property acquisitions.

It should be noted that the fiscal impact of the bill may be reduced to the extent State agencies begin to phase out gasoline-powered leaf blowers to comply with the greenhouse gas emissions reduction requirement under CSNA even in the absence of the bill.

Local Expenditures: For local jurisdictions that do not already restrict the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers, similar to the impacts described above for State agencies, local expenditures may increase to the extent that local jurisdictions migrate their gasoline-powered leaf blowers to electrically powered alternatives due to the ban on the sale of gasoline-powered leaf blowers beginning January 1, 2027.

However, it should be noted that the bill does not restrict the *use* of gasoline-powered leaf blowers by local governments, and at least one county indicates that it intends to purchase gasoline-powered leaf blowers in another state beginning January 1, 2027. Other local governments indicate that the bill likely results in a shift toward the use of electric leaf blowers once the State ban on the sale of gasoline-powered leaf blowers goes into effect. Ultimately, the actual impacts on local governments will depend on how a local jurisdiction responds to the bill's changes and the extent to which local jurisdictions migrate to electric powered leaf blowers even in the absence of the bill.

Small Business Effect: The bill has a meaningful impact on small business landscaping contractors that will need to migrate to electrically powered lawn and garden care equipment in order to be awarded State contracts.

Any small businesses that sell gasoline-powered leaf blowers and/or electric leaf blowers may also be meaningfully affected by the bill's notice requirements (beginning September 1, 2025), the bill's prohibition on the sale of gasoline-powered leaf blowers (beginning January 1, 2027), and/or the phasing out of the use of gasoline-powered

leaf blowers by State government. Because the ban on the sale of gasoline-powered leaf blowers does not take effect until January 1, 2027, it is assumed that any small businesses that sell affected leaf blowers are able to sell existing stock before the ban goes into place.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 91 of 2024 and HB 399 of 2023.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Frederick, and Montgomery counties; Maryland Association of Counties; Baltimore City; cities of Frederick and Hyattsville; Maryland Municipal League; Baltimore City Community College; University System of Maryland; St. Mary's College of Maryland; Maryland Department of the Environment; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

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