

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HB 934, BANNING OF GAS-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS  
(GLBs)

To the Maryland General Assembly

Roy Sewall

February 25, 2022

I am a 53-year resident of Bethesda. I have lived for 45 years in the tiny Town of Oakmont, across Old Georgetown Road from NIH. There are roughly 60 homes.

I chair the Electric Lawn Equipment Committee for the Town. For almost a year we studied GLBs and alternatives, conducted a survey of town residents (90% response rate). We also tested GLBs versus electric units and found today's electric leaf blowers quite competitive in terms of price, performance, and ease of use. In addition, they are much quieter and produce very few emissions.

Although I would like to address the generic range of severe noise, health, and social justice issues related to gas leaf blowers, I will restrict my comments today to their impact to people working from home.

Most homes in Oakmont are owned by professional workers, many of whom are working from home. My wife and I are examples. We all know that working at home is a major result of the pandemic and is not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future.

**Noise from GLBs causes immense disruption to our ability to work from home – to concentrate, to conduct videoconferencing calls, and to have phone conversations.**

There are over a dozen homes here that hire GLB contractors. When the house across the street has two GLBs working simultaneously, the sound in our house is totally disruptive to any business activity, for one to two hours. Other GLBs in the neighborhood will fire up during the day. GLB contractors are generally hired by neighbors who are not working at home, so they do not appreciate the havoc that is caused.

**Please imagine your offices being barraged with GLB sounds during working hours.**

In a wealthy, progressive state like ours, it is unfathomable that so many of us work-at-home residents have to wait so long for some relief from such an obvious nightmare.

Contractors will have to make the transition to electric to remain viable and competitive, and there are costs involved. The sooner the better. If some financial help must be provided, why not do it now instead of later?

Do we have to be years behind DC? The big question is why not do all of this transition, including laws prohibiting GLBs, right away rather than later? What problems do we solve by delaying?