

**Submission Date: 2/23/22**

**Hearing Date: 2/25/22**

**Bill: HB934**  
**Title: Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers – Sale, Offering for Sale, and Use – Prohibition**  
**Position: Favorable**  
**Committee: Economic Matters Committee**

Dear Committee Members,

I am Caitlin Muhlbach, a Registered Nurse and resident of Hagerstown, where I live with my husband and two young children. I have worked at our local hospital, Meritus Medical Center, for almost six years. My husband, Karl, is the Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Boonsboro. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of HB934.

We own only electric lawn equipment to care for our lawn. As city residents without a garage, electric lawn equipment eliminates the danger of storing gasoline in and around our home. Our electric equipment is quiet and efficient, and many of our neighbors agree—and also own electric equipment themselves. We feel that one way to live out our Christian faith is to be responsible stewards of the environment. Electric lawn equipment is one small way we demonstrate that stewardship.

Gas-powered leaf blowers have negative environmental and health implications for our communities. Gas-powered leaf blowers typically use two-stroke engines, which are known for higher exhaust emissions. In fact, in a 2011 comparison between auto and leaf-blower emissions, it was found that 30 minutes of lawn care using an Echo two-stroke leaf blower equates to the same levels of hydrocarbon, smog-forming emissions as a 3,900-mile drive in a Ford F-150. While homeowners use these blowers in moderation, it is often people of lower socioeconomic backgrounds who work in landscaping that are regularly exposed to the fumes, pollutants, and unsafe noise levels at close range. To the operator of a gas-powered leaf blower, the noise is around 95-115 decibels. OSHA recognizes that sound exposure over 85 decibels causes hearing loss. The health hazards posed by the crude engines of these leaf blowers are an environmental justice issue for the equipment operators and also for our vulnerable populations, such as children and older adults, who are even more susceptible to respiratory infection and hearing loss.

While this is not a macro-level solution that will address climate change, it is about the micro-level health and well being of our neighbors and communities. We urge you to adopt this legislation in the State of Maryland as we continue to find ways to protect the environment, care for our vulnerable populations, and create peaceful communities and neighborhoods.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Caitlin Muhlbach, RN**  
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