



## HB399

**Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers - State Purchase and Use – Prohibition**  
**Testimony before the House Health and Government Operations Committee**  
**Hearing March 1, 2023**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Delegate Pena-Melnyk and members of the committee, my name is Elizabeth Fixsen, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in **support of HB399**, prohibiting the government of Maryland from purchasing or using gas-powered leaf blowers. We thank those delegates who have sponsored this bill.

Gas powered leaf blowers produce hundreds of times more hazardous pollutants and fine particulates than automobiles. They also create CO2 emissions that contribute to the climate crisis.

Gas leaf blowers harm the environment in other ways. Spills from refueling contaminate soil and leach into waterways. Maintenance of gas-powered leaf blowers produces toxic waste such as fuel filters and contaminated air filters. Blowers erode, compact, and dry out soil, which harms plants, microorganisms and pollinators.

Gas powered leaf blowers create high intensity, low frequency noise that impacts nearby homes, schools, and parks and disturbs wildlife. Operating a gas leaf blower can cause permanent hearing loss in two hours and can impact 90 nearby homes.

Gas leaf blowers pose other health risks by emitting high levels of formaldehyde, benzene, fine particulate matter and smog-forming chemicals. When used to clear demolition debris, they can pollute the air with lead and asbestos. These are known to cause dizziness, headaches, asthma attacks, heart and lung disease, cancer and dementia. Clouds of debris created by blowers can contain pollens, fertilizer, dried animal feces, herbicides, and pesticides– polluting the air we breathe.)

Replacing gas-powered blowers with electric blowers is the responsible thing for the state of Maryland to do as an environmental steward. Technology is constantly evolving, and commercial battery-powered blowers on the market today offer competitive power and efficiency. As time passes, more and more landscapers are adopting environmentally friendly methods for grounds maintenance.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**

Elizabeth Fixsen  
Savage, MD