



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**March 1, 2023**

**Health and Government Operations Committee**

**HB 399**

***Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers - State Purchase and Use – Prohibition***

**FAVORABLE**

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) as well as the Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust, on behalf of our Maryland supporters, strongly supports House Bill 399, which would eliminate the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers by the state.

People, neighborhoods, and government across the country are moving away from gasoline-powered leaf blowers. In addition to the well-documented pollution (including ozone and greenhouse gasses) emitted by these devices, they also have a serious impact on wildlife, destroying habitat, killing creatures wintering over in the leaves, and harming animals in the vicinity of their use.

The gasoline-powered motors on average produce 65 to 80 decibels at 50 feet away, which can cause hearing issues such as tinnitus after just two hours of exposure. And with some of the most powerful models exceeding 112 decibels, hearing damage is caused in just one minute. This has a clear impact on the human using the leaf blower, but also disrupts and disturbs animals in the vicinity of its use.

Leaf litter is a critical source of shelter and food for turtles, amphibians, birds, small mammals, and invertebrates. Many native pollinators winter over in leaf litter, and while they can be safely raked aside, the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers not only blows away the leaves – it blows away the creatures hibernating within them.

By eliminating the purchase and use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers for state purposes, the government can not only make a difference immediately for the preservation of wildlife but can also model best practices for management of various properties. We thank the committee for its consideration of this legislation and request a favorable vote on HB399.