



Maryland Arborist Association, Inc.

Danielle Bauer Farace
Executive Director

HB 0091 – Fossil Fuel-Powered Lawn and Garden Care Equipment - State Purchase, Use, and Contracts – Prohibition

Committee: Health and Government Operations
MAA Position: **OPPOSED**

Date: January 19, 2024

The Maryland Arborist Association, Inc. (MAA) works to promote the importance of proper tree care, education in the field of arboriculture, and support the accomplishments of arborists. Our members use fossil fuel-powered lawn and garden care equipment on a regular basis and have significant concerns related to HB0091, its impact on our membership, and the precedent that it would set for the tree care industry within the state of Maryland.

Our membership relies on a variety of fossil fuel-powered lawn and garden equipment, including leaf blowers, lawn mowers, hedge trimmers, and weed trimmers. Those members of the MAA that hold state contracts would be directly impacted by this legislation. For those who don't, it will still set a precedent that could lead to subsequent consequences due to the cost of equipment replacement and loss of efficiency.

An example of this is leaf blowers, a piece of equipment heavily relied upon by our membership. Price estimates show that commercial electric leaf blowers retail between \$280-400. For small businesses that will need to purchase multiple units to replace their current gasoline-powered leaf blowers to comply with this bill, this would be a considerable expense. Compounding that replacement cost is the additional cost to installation of charging stations, purchasing additional backup batteries, managing proper battery disposal, and the need for specialized parts and service. Additional batteries can cost over \$1,000 per battery and are increasingly hard to come by as with many products due to current supply chain issues.

When comparing the efficiency of gasoline-powered leaf blowers versus their electric alternatives, users see a decrease in both blowing power and air velocity. Furthermore, battery-powered leaf blowers have a shorter run-time as well as added charging time. This loss of efficiency results in the need for additional man hours and an increased cost for clients. Our industry is already facing a labor shortage, this bill will generate the need for more labor to complete the same job.

Due to the impact on Maryland's tree care industry, MAA requests your unfavorable report on HB0091.

Sincerely,

Danielle Bauer Farace
Executive Director

7151 Hubbard Road, Federalsburg, MD 21632
410-928-4888 • office@mdarborist.com • www.mdarborist.com