



Maryland Green Industries Council
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January 23, 2024

House Bill 91 - Fossil Fuel-Powered Lawn and Garden Care Equipment - State Purchase, Use, and Contracts – Prohibition

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Position: OPPOSE

The Maryland Green Industries Council (MaGIC) opposes House Bill 91 - Fossil Fuel-Powered Lawn and Garden Care Equipment - State Purchase, Use, and Contracts – Prohibition. This legislation prohibits the State from purchasing fossil fuel-powered lawn and garden care equipment beginning January 1, 2025. It also prohibits the State from entering into or renewing a contract under which the contractor, or a subcontractor employed by the contractor, uses fossil fuel-powered lawn and garden care equipment beginning January 1, 2025.

Lawn and garden care equipment includes leaf blowers, lawn mowers, weed trimmers and hedge trimmers. MaGIC's opposition stems from the prohibition of the state entering into a contract with a contractor that uses fossil fuel-powered lawn and garden care equipment. Many small businesses serve as contractors to the state for lawn and landscape services. This bill would make it prohibitively expensive and in some cases, logistically impossible, for these lawn and landscape businesses to continue their contracts with the state of Maryland.

The primary issues with requiring the transition to battery-powered are cost, commercial grade availability, logistics of battery life and disposal.

First, this bill would unfairly favor large companies that can make the transition to battery powered equipment over small businesses for state contracts. Battery powered lawn equipment is as much as 50% more expensive than the gas powered alternatives. This bill would not only require more expensive equipment, but a huge upfront investment to transition to battery powered equipment before the January 1, 2025 deadline. Additionally, contractors would need to make significant investments in extra batteries, chargers and mobile recharging infrastructure. One backpack leaf blower would require 9 fully charged batteries to complete one eight-hour work day.

Second, battery powered lawn equipment is not as advanced from a power and efficiency standpoint as the gas powered alternatives. The battery powered equipment is not as powerful or fast which means jobs take longer. Truly commercial grade battery powered lawn equipment is not yet available.

MaGIC represents the Maryland Nursery, Landscape and Green House Association, Maryland Arborist Association, Maryland Association of Green Industries and the Frederick Area Landscape Contractors Association.



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Third, battery life and charging logistics add to the cost of this legislation. The District of Columbia banned gas powered leaf blowers and the city now has a generator truck follow their crews to charge the batteries. The options are either buy 10 batteries for each piece of equipment to recharge each night or use a gas powered generators on a specially outfitted truck to recharge throughout the day. Our members are also uncomfortable with the practices used in mining to produce the batteries and uncertainties around availability of recycling when the batteries useful life is complete.

Finally, not only does this legislation make the cost of doing business higher for the contractors but also the state of Maryland and taxpayers. If contractors are required to replace all their equipment with electric, invest in charging infrastructure, and take longer to complete jobs with less efficient equipment; the cost of the jobs is going to increase not only for the state but also consumers.

MaGIC urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 91.

MaGIC represents the Maryland Nursery, Landscape and Green House Association, Maryland Arborist Association, Maryland Association of Green Industries and the Frederick Area Landscape Contractors Association.