



HB0701

Clean Air Quiet Communities Act

Testimony before Economics Matters Committee

Hearing February 11, 2025

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair C.T. Wilson, Vice-Chair Brian M. Crosby, and members of the committee, my name is Julia Lawrence, and I represent the 800+ 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 Bill HB0701**, which proposes that:

1. The State will not purchase gas leaf blowers after July 1, 2025, except for a few exceptions.
 2. The State and its contractors will phase out use on State-owned property by January 1, 2030.
 3. Gas leaf blowers will no longer be sold in Maryland after January 1, 2027.
- * **This bill will not prevent anyone from using gas leaf blowers on any private or county property, except where local ordinances apply.**

This bill is important, and Indivisible HoCoMD is supporting it, because gas leaf blowing devices contribute significantly to air and noise pollution. Electric and battery-powered devices are just as comparable:

1. Using a gas-powered leaf blower for about 12½ hours produces as much air pollution as the average Marylander driving 13,500 miles in one year. Pollution from one hour of use is equivalent to that of driving 1,100 miles from Baltimore to Miami. [1] Gas lawn equipment puts out more fine-particulate (PM2.5) air pollution in Maryland than does 6.4 million cars. Most of this pollution (85%) comes from devices using two-stroke engines (e.g. leaf blowers, push mowers, chain saws, string trimmers). [2]

Long-term (months to years) exposure to PM2.5 has been linked to reduced lung function growth in children, respiratory disease such as asthma and COPD, and the ability to fight off respiratory infections resulting in higher morbidity and mortality, particularly in people who have chronic heart or lung diseases. [3]

2. Loud noise is not only a disruptive nuisance but is hazardous as well. Noise levels from gasoline-powered leaf blowers can reach 90 to 110 decibels. Two hours at 85 dBA, or just 15 minutes of daily exposure at 100 dBA, can cause permanent hearing damage. Landscape worker noise exposures have been shown to exceed both OSHA standards

and construction-industry exposures, where half of workers exposed to loud noise have material hearing impairment that impacts their daily life. [4]

3. The quiet alternative is cordless, battery-powered and electric leaf-blowers which can be just as powerful as gasoline-powered ones. [5] “Manufacturers say professionals will save roughly \$2,000 annually in fuel and maintenance by switching to battery and electric handheld equipment. Powering with electricity is far less expensive than fuel, and batteries can be used across multiple devices. While batteries can be expensive, they cost less than the fuel used over the (product’s) life, making electric devices less expensive overall,” [6] and don’t put out any air pollution at the source.

Thank you to Delegate Foley, Guyton, Lehman, Ruth, Spiegel, and Terrasa for sponsoring this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Julia Lawrence
Columbia, MD 21044

Sources:

[1] *California Air Resources Board, CARB SORE Fact Sheet, [SORE - Small Engine Fact Sheet | California Air Resources Board](#)*

[2] *HB 701 Clean Air Quiet Communities Fact Sheet, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/13vXAkW3xwm7FdxsZ7NV-Rmy9xB2vcmwjqvtMkGlX8ek/edit?tab=t.0>*

[3] *American Lung Association, [Particle Pollution | American Lung Association, lung.org](#)*

[4] *Construction Statistics, Noise and Hearing Loss, www.cdc.gov/niosh/noise/surveillance/construction.html*

[5] *[Best Cordless Leaf Blowers of 2025 - Consumer Reports](#)*

[6] *California Air Resources Board, CARB SORE Fact Sheet, [SORE - Small Engine Fact Sheet | California Air Resources Board](#)*