

Hearing: Economic Matters
Bill: HB701 Clean Air Quiet Communities Act
Date: February 11, 2025
Position: Favorable

Dear House Committee on Economic Matters and Chair, Delegate Wilson,

I ask you to please report favorably on House Bill 701, the Clean Air, Quiet Communities Act.

I am a long-term resident of Maryland, a self-employed business owner, a Master Gardener, and the founder and head of a local environmental group. My neighborhood, and my life in each of these capacities, has been negatively impacted by the increasing and incessant use of leaf blowers. The deafening noise destroys the quiet from dawn through dusk, every day of the week, from the beginning of lawnmowing in March through the last of the autumn leaves in December.

As a homeowner, there is rarely a pause from the overwhelmingly loud gas-powered leaf blowers. With closely spaced homes, there is always at least someone in the neighborhood – or more often now a whole team of landscapers – using leaf blowers. In the spring, they clear the winter leaves and debris off the patio, the decks, and the sidewalks. In the winter, they clear snow. But it is throughout the summer and fall that the nonstop blowing of grass clippings and leaves destroys any opportunity to enjoy a stroll in the yard, dinner on the deck, or a walk in the neighborhood.

As a self-employed business owner, I work from home and conduct Zoom calls throughout the day. I have long since given up on leaving windows open during the summer, despite the occasional perfect weather. Even with the windows tightly closed, the vibrations and loud drone of leaf blowers make it difficult to hear my clients, to concentrate, and to be productive. Sadly, my clients are also often dealing with the same noise on their end.

As a Master Gardener, leaf blowers impact my ability to contribute to the community, making it unpleasant and difficult to carry out volunteer community gardening and home consultations. Our team of Master Gardeners conducts home consults to help new gardeners and homeowners garden more successfully and sustainably. But during our visits, a team of gas-powered leaf blowers anywhere in the vicinity drowns out our conversation. We yell to each other and attempt escape from the noise on the other side of the house until it's over. This is not an occasional event – with the closely packed communities, the increased usage of leaf blowers around the year, and the tremendous noise of this gas-powered equipment, leaf blowers disrupt almost every home visit and every volunteer gardening event.

I am also the organizer of a local environmental group in my community within Columbia, Kings Contrivance. As the leader of this group, I receive frequent emails from our residents about various issues that bother them: leaf blowers (and the high deer population) top the list of issues that we hear about. I've heard from dozens of angry and frustrated residents ready to leave their lifelong homes due to the increasing, incessant, and intolerable noise of gas-powered leaf blowers.

We have the opportunity here to help Maryland communities. Please pass this bill and give us hope for a quieter future.

Sincerely,
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