



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 11, 2025

BILL NUMBER: House Bill – 701 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers – Purchase, Use, and Sale - Prohibitions

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

Due to the number of properties managed by the Department of Natural Resources and to the higher cost of battery powered equipment, this bill will have a significant fiscal impact on the Department for properties it manages across the State outside of the exclusions provided for in the bill.

This bill prohibits the State from purchasing gasoline-powered blowers beginning July 1, 2025, and prohibits their use beginning May 1, 2027, excepting certain months until a complete prohibition beginning January 1, 2030. To meet this requirement, the Department would need to quickly invest in battery operated blowers to maintain its properties across the State. Afterwards, additional funds would be required to replace equipment as it meets the end of its life or when new properties or facilities are acquired. The bill does contain exclusions only for Wildland Fire Suppression activities, prescribed burn management activities, first-fighting activities carried out by authorized personnel, and emergency response activities. These exclusions will help the Department to continue addressing wildfires and other emergencies across the State.

The bill will also affect State contractors and subcontractors, the effects on them are hard to gauge. Contractors will be required to meet these standards, and the cost will ultimately be passed on to the state, increasing the cost of many contracts.

With the inclusion of the State requirement to meet local government standards, the State and its contractor or subcontractors could see larger fiscal effects than those presented here. These are also hard to predict without thorough research into each county and municipality to determine if any current properties would be affected by this regulation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Currently the Department maintains and operates approximately 502,393 acres of public lands across the state as 225 units managed primarily within the State Park System, State Forest System, Wildlife Management Areas, and Fisheries Management Areas. The groundskeeping tasks associated with management of these lands for public use require a sizable inventory of lawn and garden equipment, including numerous leaf blowers.

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BILL EXPLANATION

This bill's purpose is to prohibit the State from purchasing gasoline-powered leaf blowers beginning July 1, 2025, and establish a process to phase out the use of gasoline powered leaf blowers by the State or any contractor or subcontractor employed by the State beginning intermittently May 1, 2027 and fully January 1, 2030. It also prohibits the sale of gasoline powered blowers within the State beginning January 1, 2027. Finally, it requires the State, or any contractor or subcontractor employed by the State, to comply with certain local government standards related to gasoline-powered leaf blowers.