



Testimony in Support of HB0167 – Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Hearing 2/17/2026 at 1:00 p.m.

From: **Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi**, For identification purposes only: Co-founder, [Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund](#); Member, Maryland Commission on Climate Change

Dear Chair and Members of the **House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee**:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **House Bill 0167**, sponsored by Delegate Foley.

HB0167 would prohibit the State from purchasing gasoline-powered leaf blowers and from using them—either directly or through contractors or subcontractors working on State-owned land, while appropriately allowing for emergency response, firefighting, wildland fire suppression, and prescribed burn management activities.

This bill that protects **public health**, reduces harmful pollution, and allows Maryland to continue leading by example.

For purposes of identification, I am a resident of Annapolis and a member of the **Maryland Commission on Climate Change**, where I represent philanthropy. I am also the co-founder of the **Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund**, which supports dozens of nonprofit organizations working on climate solutions, public health, disability inclusion, and community resilience. I am a full-time volunteer on these issues because I see firsthand how pollution and extreme weather are already harming people across our state.

Gasoline-powered leaf blowers are a significant and avoidable source of **toxic air pollution, fine particulate matter, greenhouse gas emissions, and excessive noise**. These impacts are especially harmful to **workers**, nearby residents, and people who rely on public spaces.

From a health and disability perspective, the effects are real and immediate. Exposure to emissions from gasoline-powered equipment can worsen **asthma, COPD, heart disease, and other respiratory and cardiovascular conditions**. Excessive noise can pose serious challenges for people with **sensory sensitivities, autism, PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, and other disabilities**, effectively making public spaces unusable or unsafe during routine maintenance activities. Reducing these exposures is an important step toward making State-managed properties healthier and more accessible for all Marylanders.

HB0167 aligns with Maryland's broader climate and health goals, including the **Climate Solutions Now Act**, while remaining practical and flexible. The bill includes clear definitions, sensible exemptions for emergency and safety-related activities, and a **phased timeline** that gives agencies and contractors ample time to plan, budget, and transition.

In addition to health and environmental benefits, many public agencies and private users have found that electric leaf blowers and similar equipment can result in **lower lifetime operating costs**, including savings on fuel and reduced maintenance needs due to fewer moving parts. While upfront costs may vary, the bill's long lead time allows the State to evaluate total cost of ownership and make fiscally responsible procurement decisions.

I also appreciate that the bill respects and reinforces **local government authority**, requiring State operations to comply with local standards that are at least as stringent or that begin earlier. This ensures consistency, fairness, and respect for local leadership.

Finally, I would encourage the State, once this bill is enacted, to pair it with a clear implementation and public education strategy. When Maryland leads visibly and successfully, it can encourage local governments, businesses, and residents to adopt cleaner and healthier practices as well.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the people of Maryland. I respectfully urge a **favorable report on HB0167**.

Sincerely,

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