



HB0167
Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers – Purchase and Use – Prohibitions
Testimony before the House Government, Labor, and Elections
Hearing February 17, 2026
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Wells and Co-Chair Kerr, and members of the committee, my name is Wendy Hall, and I represent the 1700+ 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 HB0167**, which would which would prohibit the State of Maryland from purchasing gasoline-powered leaf blowers starting July 1, 2026, and phase out their use on state-managed properties by 2031. This legislation represents a common-sense approach to protecting public health, improving the working conditions of state employees, and upholding Maryland's commitment to environmental leadership. We thank Delegate Foley for introducing this bill.

Why This Bill Matters

- **Protecting Frontline Workers:** The two-stroke engines commonly used in gas leaf blowers are notoriously "dirty." They emit high levels of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and fine particulate matter. State employees and contractors operate this machinery for hours at a time, often in close proximity to the exhaust, increasing their risk of cardiovascular and respiratory disease.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** A single hour of gas leaf blower use can produce as much smog-forming pollution as driving a car for hundreds of miles. By transitioning state-owned and leased buildings to electric alternatives, the State directly reduces its carbon footprint and eliminates the risk of fuel spills on public lands.
- **Reducing Noise Pollution:** Gas blowers often exceed 90-100 decibels, which can cause permanent hearing loss and disrupt the productivity of those working inside state buildings. Electric alternatives are significantly quieter, allowing for maintenance without the "acoustic neighborhood" disruption.
- **Leading by Example:** Several Maryland jurisdictions—including Montgomery County, Baltimore City, and Annapolis—have already taken steps to limit these devices. It is only fitting that the State government follows suit, modeling the sustainable practices it encourages for its citizens.

Conclusion

HB0167 provides a reasonable and necessary timeline for the State to transition its inventory. This bill is not just an environmental measure; it is a public health and workplace safety priority.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB0167.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Wendy Hall, DVM, PhD
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