



Maryland Green Industries Council
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House Bill 167 - Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers - Purchase and Use - Prohibitions

Committee: Government, Labor and Elections

Position: OPPOSE

The Maryland Green Industries Council (MaGIC) represents a wide array of professionals in the green industry, including arborists, lawn and landscape experts, and nursery and greenhouse growers. House Bill 167 prohibits the state from purchasing gas powered leaf blowers after July 1, 2026 and prohibits state contractors from using gas powered leaf blowers on state property after January 1, 2031. While MaGIC genuinely appreciates the sponsors efforts to narrow the scope of the bill, our members still have concerns about the availability of commercial grade electric leaf blowers, battery charging logistics and safety, the impact of this legislation on small businesses and the precedent this sets for further limitations.

The bill's prohibition on state contractors using gas powered leaf blowers would make it prohibitively expensive and, in some cases, logistically impossible for many small businesses to maintain their contracts or procure new contracts with the state of Maryland. Commercial-grade battery-powered leaf blowers are up to 50% more expensive than their gasoline-powered counterparts. Furthermore, contractors would need to invest in additional batteries, chargers, and mobile recharging infrastructure. One backpack leaf blower would currently require nine fully charged batteries to complete a full eight-hour workday. Alternatively, contractors would need to invest in mobile charging infrastructure. One solar powered charging trailer can cost between \$6,000 and \$25,000 depending on capacity. This bill would disproportionately benefit large companies with the financial resources to make the transition to battery-powered equipment.

Our members are also concerned about the environmental impact of the mining practices used to produce batteries, as well as the uncertainties around battery recycling when their useful life expires. A commercial battery-powered leaf blower typically has a battery life of about 1,200 hours, or approximately six months of commercial use before it needs to be replaced. This raises concerns about the long-term sustainability of transitioning to battery-powered equipment, as the disposal of used batteries may create environmental hazards.

While we have these concerns, MaGIC does understand that technology is rapidly changing and the State is investing resources in studying battery safety and disposal. Therefore, MaGIC is willing to discuss potential compromises such as:

- Allow the State to fully transition to electric leaf blowers and report back to the legislature on the cost and logistics to better inform state contractors.
- Allow the agencies of jurisdiction to provide waivers or extensions to the extent that the transition would cause significant financial hardship on the contractor.
- Provide an exemption for Maryland Certified Small Business Entities.

We look forward to continuing to work on a solution that does not disproportionately impact our Maryland landscape and arborist small businesses.

MaGIC represents the Maryland Nursery, Landscape and Green House Association, Maryland Arborist Association, Maryland Association of Green Industries and the Frederick Area Landscape Contractors Association.