



# Maryland Arborist Association, Inc.

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Executive Director

## HB 0167 – Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers - Purchase and Use - Prohibitions

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections

Date: February 13, 2026

MAA Position: **OPPOSED**

The Maryland Arborist Association, Inc. (MAA) works to promote the importance of proper tree care, education in the field of arboriculture, and support the accomplishments of arborists. While the Association supports efforts to reduce environmental impacts and encourages the responsible adoption of new technologies where feasible, we have significant concerns regarding the practicality, safety, and economic consequences of HB 0167, and therefore respectfully oppose this legislation.

Although battery-powered blowers continue to improve, many commercially available units do not yet provide the sustained airflow, runtime, and durability required for large-scale commercial operations. Contractors maintaining large state-owned facilities often require continuous operation in demanding environments where high-output equipment is essential, and uncertainty remains as to whether battery-powered equipment can reliably meet these operational demands at scale.

Cost is also a significant concern. Electric blowers suitable for commercial use can cost substantially more than comparable gasoline-powered units, and maintaining productivity often requires multiple battery packs or mobile charging systems. These added equipment and infrastructure costs are difficult to absorb, particularly under fixed-price maintenance agreements. In addition, lithium-ion batteries present known fire risks during charging and when exposed to high temperatures. Crews frequently transport and charge equipment in enclosed trailers or outdoor settings, conditions that increase the risk of thermal events and warrant careful consideration.

The Maryland Arborist Association is also concerned about the precedent this legislation could establish and the barriers it may create for small and minority-owned businesses. While the bill applies to State operations and contractors, policies of this nature often serve as a foundation for broader regulatory efforts that may later extend to private industry. Requiring significant investment in higher-cost equipment and charging infrastructure could further raise the cost of entry for firms seeking to perform work on State property, making contracts more difficult to obtain for small and minority-owned businesses and reducing competition.

While we have these concerns, the Maryland Arborist Association recognizes that technology is evolving and that the State is investing resources in studying battery safety and disposal. We are willing to work collaboratively on practical solutions that allow time for the industry to adapt. Potential approaches could include allowing the State to transition first and report back on costs and logistics to better inform contractors, authorizing waivers or extensions where compliance would cause significant financial hardship and providing exemptions or delayed compliance pathways for Maryland Certified Small Business Entities. We look forward to continuing to work with policymakers on solutions that achieve environmental goals without disproportionately impacting Maryland's tree care industry.

Sincerely,

Danielle Bauer  
Executive Director