



Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay  
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*Deeply rooted in native plants,  
promoting native landscapes  
through education, advocacy and  
collaborative action.*

**Testimony:** HB0167, Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers - Purchase and Use - Prohibitions  
**Committee:** Government, Labor, and Elections  
**Hearing Date:** February 17, 2026  
**Position:** FAVORABLE

Chair - Melissa Wells; Vice Chair, Kenneth Ker, and honorable members of the Committee:

Located in Southern Maryland, Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay<sup>1</sup>, a 71-member chapter of the national organization Wild Ones<sup>2</sup>, strives to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities across Southern Maryland. We **strongly urge you to support this bill** for the benefits it will bring to our local ecosystems, including the native plants and creatures (biodiversity) that call Maryland home. We must take every step we can to save our treasured Chesapeake Bay and its watershed for future generations.

Gasoline-powered leaf blowers contribute to air and noise pollution, both of which have negative impacts on humans, animals, and plants. Prohibiting the State from purchasing and using gasoline-powered leaf blowers by its employees and contractors on state-owned property will 1) improve air quality through the reduction in exhaust pollutants (such as nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons) and 2) reduce noise pollution.

**Air Pollution:** The effects of gas-powered emissions on ground level ozone are extremely harmful to humans, wildlife and even plants. For humans and other animals, it makes it difficult to breathe. For plants, the effects are profound, affecting plant health, tree growth, and canopy.

- Ozone-induced compounds decrease the numbers of flowers and fruits a plant will produce, and they impair the plant's efficient use of water and other functions.
- Plants weakened by ozone may be more susceptible to pests, disease, and drought.
- Some of our most important crops, like soybeans, wheat, and rice, are affected, contributing to billions of dollars in reduced crop yields.
- Air pollution can weaken bees' immune systems and make breathing more difficult by damaging their circulatory system. Polluted air can cause pollinators to become disoriented, and even cause memory issues, making them take longer to learn and remember plant smells.<sup>3</sup>

**Noise pollution:** According to the World Health Organization, noise is one of the most hazardous forms of pollution. Studies of over 100 species conclude man-made noise has a major impact and must be considered a pollutant and a serious form of environmental change.<sup>4</sup> In one study, loud noise resulted in a dozen important avian species avoiding an area,<sup>5</sup> resulting in far fewer tree seedlings after 15 years. When native trees are no longer available, what happens to other species that depend on them? What other plants will not be pollinated and will no longer reproduce when those trees and the wildlife disappear?

Wildly appreciative of your support for this bill,

*Marlene Smith*, President, Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay

<sup>1</sup>Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay Chapter, <https://chesapeakebay.wildones.org/>

<sup>2</sup>Wild Ones Natural Landscapers, LTD, a nationwide nonprofit organization with local chapters throughout the country, including 5 chapters in Maryland, <https://wildones.org/>

<sup>3</sup>Brokaw, Julie, Air Pollution Hurts Pollinators Too, but We Can Help, April 11, 2024, Xerces Society

<sup>4</sup> Kunc, H. P. and Schmidt, R., The effects of anthropogenic noise on animals: a meta-analysis, Biology Letters, Nov. 20, 2019

<sup>5</sup>Francis et al., "Noise Pollution Changes Avian Communities and Species Interactions," Curr. Biol., 19:1415-19 (2009)