



**February 13, 2026**

**Support: HB 167- Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers - Purchase, Use, and Sale - Prohibitions (Clean Air Quiet Communities Act)**

Delegate Foley and Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee:

The Maryland Public Health Association supports HB 167- Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers - Purchase and Use - Prohibitions (Clean Air Quiet Communities Act), and we thank the delegates championing this bill for their leadership on this issue. The Clean Air Quiet Communities Act promotes public health by targeting gas-powered leaf blowers, which are known to contribute to both air and noise pollution, impacting the health of those using equipment and within the vicinity of its use.

*Air Pollution*

The Clean Air Quiet Communities Act prohibits the state of Maryland from purchasing gas-powered leaf blowers as of January 1, 2026. The bill also prohibits any contractor or subcontractor employed by the state from using gas-powered leaf blowers beginning on January 1, 2031, marking a significant advancement towards reducing contributions towards air pollution. While seemingly inconsequential, gas-powered leaf blowers are a significant contributor to air pollution. Using a gas-powered leaf blower for around 1 hour is the equivalent of driving 1,100 miles in a passenger vehicle.<sup>1 2</sup> The exhaust created by gas-powered leaf blowers contains significant air pollutants that have severe health impacts. These air pollutants include PM 2.5, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and several air toxics. PM 2.5, or fine particulate matter, combined with nitrogen oxides have several health impacts, such as difficulty breathing, coughing, irregular heartbeat, including but not limited to exacerbated asthma and other chronic lung diseases.<sup>3</sup> Air toxics, including benzene and formaldehyde, have been shown to contribute to increased rates of cancer. Lastly, carbon dioxide is a significant contributor to climate change. Regulating the concentrations of these pollutants is of utmost importance with the high prevalence of asthma in Maryland: 7.6% of children and 8.9% of adults suffer from asthma, with rates only on the rise.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *SORE - Small Engine Fact Sheet | California Air Resources Board.* (2021, December 15). Ww2.Arb.ca.gov. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/fact-sheets/sore-small-engine-fact-sheet>

<sup>2</sup> *Why it's time to switch to a new generation of clean, quiet electric lawn equipment Lawn Care Goes Electric.* (n.d.). [https://publicinterestnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Lawn\\_Care\\_Goes\\_Electric\\_Oct23.pdf](https://publicinterestnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Lawn_Care_Goes_Electric_Oct23.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> *United States Environmental Protection Agency.* (2022, August 30). Health and Environmental Effects of Particulate Matter (PM). US EPA. <https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/health-and-environmental-effects-particulate-matter-pm>

<sup>4</sup> *Asthma.* (2019). Maryland.gov Enterprise Agency Template. <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEhfp/eh/Pages/asthma.aspx>

## *Noise Pollution*

Alongside polluting air, gas-powered leaf blowers contribute significantly to noise pollution. Studies have shown that this equipment exceeded the World Health Organization's "daytime sound standards."<sup>5</sup> This level of maintenance sound production is related to severe adverse health effects, such as hearing loss. Loud noise can also create physical and psychological stress, reduce productivity, interfere with communication and concentration, and contribute to workplace accidents and injuries by making it difficult to hear warning signals. Effects can include a limited ability to hear high-frequency sounds, understand speech, and communicate.<sup>6</sup> Those most vulnerable include personnel operating the equipment and those residing in areas with high frequency of gas-powered leaf blower usage. A Sierra Club survey found that "[r]oughly ¾ of Marylanders complain about gas leaf blower noise, saying it impacts their ability to concentrate, work, learn, and sleep and even affects physical and mental health for some."<sup>7</sup> Additionally, researchers from Quiet Communities and Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health found that tested lawn equipment, including gas-powered blowers and a hose vacuum, "produced levels of noise that exceeded the World Health Organization's "daytime sound standards" of 55 amplitude-weighted decibels (dB(A)) as far as 800 feet – more than two football fields – away from the testing site". With this level of impact, those using this equipment may suffer a significantly negative impact on their ability to hear.<sup>8</sup>

## *Potential Benefits of Using Electric Lawn Equipment*

In addition to reducing air and noise pollution, there is also evidence of benefits to consumers' wallets, with reduced costs of electric mowers as compared to gas powered mowers. While electric lawn equipment can sometimes have a higher initial price associated, they tend to save consumer money over time and produce less pollution, as consumers no longer have to purchase gasoline and maintain the engine used on gas-powered blowers and lawn equipment. Additionally, it was reported that manufacturers identified an estimated \$2,000 annual savings in fuel and maintenance by switching from gas to battery and electric lawn devices.<sup>2 7</sup>

We support HB 167 as it prioritizes the health of Marylanders by taking a definitive step in limiting air and noise pollution for Marylanders and supporting the state's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 from 2006 levels.<sup>9</sup> This bill also ensures that taxpayer dollars are spent towards more sustainable solutions. With this bill, the state of Maryland will be closer to achieving its goal of a cleaner, safer Maryland for all.

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<sup>5</sup> E, W., & JL, B. (2017). Characteristics of Lawn and Garden Equipment Sound: A Community Pilot Study. *Journal of Environmental and Toxicological Studies*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.16966/2576-6430.106>

<sup>6</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration. (2024). Occupational Noise Exposure - Health Effects | Occupational Safety and Health Administration. [www.osha.gov](https://www.osha.gov/noise/health-effects). <https://www.osha.gov/noise/health-effects>

<sup>7</sup> HB701 Clean Air Quiet Communities Act. Sierra Club Maryland Chapter. Google Docs. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/13vXAkW3xwm7FdxsZ7NV-Rmy9xB2vcmwjvqtMkGIX8ek/edit?tab=t.0>

<sup>8</sup> Walker E, Banks JL. Characteristics of Lawn and Garden Equipment Sound: A Community Pilot Study. *J Environ Toxicol Stud*. 2017 Dec;1(1):10.16966/2576-6430.106. doi: 10.16966/2576-6430.106. Epub 2017 Nov 3. PMID: 31448365; PMCID: PMC6707732.

<sup>9</sup> MDOT Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) Plan - MDOT. (n.d.). [www.mdot.maryland.gov](http://www.mdot.maryland.gov). <https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=88>