

**Testimony on Behalf of County Executive Marc Elrich  
on Bill 18-22, Noise Control – Leaf Removal Equipment**

September 20, 2022

Good afternoon. My name is Stan Edwards, chief of the Division of Energy, Climate, and Compliance in the Department of Environmental Protection. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of County Executive Elrich in support of Bill 18-22 to phase out gasoline powered leaf blowers.

Gasoline leaf blowers are a nuisance to be around and damaging to health due to the characteristics of the noise they create. Research shows gasoline leaf blowers are 2-4 times louder than electric blowers at the source. The low frequency noise they generate travels farther and penetrates buildings more readily than electric equipment. This means impacts are felt not only by the user, but also in areas where the leaf blowers are being used – near people's homes and communities.

The use of gasoline leaf blowers also affects the health of users, who are often minority workers using them day in and day out not just throughout the fall, but to move lawn clippings, mulch, and other debris throughout the spring and summer. The low frequency noise of gas blowers can be felt and heard through hearing protection devices. Long term use, even with hearing protection, is associated with permanent hearing loss.

Electric plug-in and battery powered equipment introduced into the market in recent years can achieve the same results as gasoline equipment, with lower operating and fuel costs as compared to gasoline leaf blowers. In addition, electric alternatives do not have the same frequency or decibel level of noise, protecting both users and those subjected to noise created by these devices.

Bill 18-22 catches Montgomery County up with over 100 other jurisdictions, including our neighbors in DC and in Chevy Chase Village here in the County, who have already phased out this damaging equipment to reduce noise pollution and protect the health of their residents and workers.

I am happy to address any questions that Councilmembers may have.