

Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers: Baltimore City Council Enacts Prohibition



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The Baltimore, Maryland City Council has enacted a bill that would ban “gas-powered debris removal equipment”. See Council Bill 23-0367.

The Baltimore Mayor is expected to sign the bill.

City Council Bill 23-0367 would prohibit the use of gas-powered debris removal equipment in the City of Baltimore one year after the enactment date of the legislation.

The Bill defines gas-powered debris removal equipment broadly. It encompasses devices like leaf blowers and vacuums powered by internal combustion engines using fuel such as gasoline or alcohol.

Equipment such as lawn mowers, lawn trimmers, snow blowers, or pressure washers would not be included.

Violation of the prohibition would incur penalties. Fines escalate for subsequent offenses, and enforcement procedures include civil citations by designated officers.

Issues discussed during the consideration of the Bill included:

- Noise pollution caused by gas-powered leaf blowers can lead to hearing damage, stress-related illnesses, high blood pressure, speech interference, and sleep disruption.
- Emissions from gas-powered leaf blowers include the emission of particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds.
- Transition to electric and battery-operated leaf blowers, would be quieter, less polluting, and increasingly cost-effective.
- Is the performance power and effectiveness of battery-powered equipment similar to gas-powered equipment?
- Would electric equipment slow down and impact operations and/or activities driving up time to complete projects leading to higher costs (Baltimore Solid Waste Division has estimated that replacing existing gas-powered blower motors, currently priced at \$217.00 per unit, with electric models would increase the cost-per-unit to \$378.00).
- The impact on small businesses and the need for a transition period to allow businesses to adapt to new regulations without undue financial strain.

The proponents have cited other cities and counties that have passed similar prohibitions such as Washington D.C., Montgomery County, Chevy Chase, Annapolis, and University Park, Maryland.

A copy of Baltimore City Council Bill 23-0367 can be downloaded [here](#).