



HB 2528: Tax credits for leaf blowers should be limited

House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment – Jody Wiser – 1.30.2023

I'm Jody Wiser, speaking on behalf of Tax Fairness Oregon, a network of volunteers who advocate for a rational and equitable tax code.

In our neighborhoods, the sound of leaf blowers creates noise pollution resembling industrial zones. Their engines spew emissions that counter our effort to mitigate climate change.

In recent years battery-powered equipment has improved in many ways, including power output, battery capacity and longevity, and price.

We applaud the attempt to phase out gas engines in favor of electric leaf blowers. A subsidy for commercial landscapers to aid in the transition toward a ban may be appropriate to edge the change forward. The difference in the cost of buying electric blowers and several batteries for each may be difficult for a small-scale landscaping company without adequate access to capital.

We are not experts in landscaping. Our online review of commercial blowers indicates that the retail prices of comparable high output electric-powered leaf blowers and the several batteries that would be needed in the course of a day is higher than that for a gas-powered blower. But the operational costs are lower. One study, which we submit with our written testimony, found however that the return-on-investment crossover occurred in less than a year. In other words, in one season.

Oregon should move in the direction California has already taken. [They have banned](#) the sale of gas-powered landscape maintenance equipment, which includes leaf blowers, edgers, and lawn mowers by July 2024. The state Air Resources Board is writing the regulations.

We believe Oregon should watch California's lead. In the meantime, the committee could amend this bill to provide tax credits in Oregon's jurisdictions that choose to ban gas-powered leaf blowers. A subsidy of fifty percent of cost seems excessive. EV vehicles receive 15% or less in state subsidy. If a tax credit is to be a carrot, then a governmental ban should be the stick.

We suggest another amendment to tighten potential abuses. Nothing in the bill would prevent landscapers from taking advantage of the tax credit, then selling the new equipment at discount, providing companies another revenue stream.

We read the bills and follow the money