



January 30, 2023

To: Chair Marsh and Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and the Environment

Testimony on HB 2528 from Quiet Clean PDX

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2528. I'm with Quiet Clean PDX, a group of volunteers in Portland working to eliminate gas-powered leaf blowers. We've been championing this issue since 2018 and have amassed the support of more than 50 Oregon businesses, nonprofits, and neighborhood associations.

We have worked with the City of Portland, Multnomah County, and the Oregon legislature on phasing out gas-powered leaf blowers and other gas-powered landscaping equipment. Your own Committee has held informational hearings on our bills in both the 2019 and 2021 sessions. Each bill had several sponsors, including Representative Khanh Pham on this committee.

A growing body of research shows that gas-powered leaf blowers inflict unacceptable harms on the public and the environment, and our climate. Beyond their peculiarly annoying and disruptive noise, there's a serious emissions problem with these highly polluting devices. Mounting evidence implicates 2-stroke engines in our nation's increasing rates of heart attack, stroke, hypertension, asthma, lung disease, and even cancer. Workers who use these machines all day are at exceptional risk - and that's on top of noise-induced hearing loss.

Quiet Clean PDX supports a transition away from gas leaf blowers (and eventually from all gas-powered landscaping equipment) in a fair and equitable manner. We realize this shift will require both pressure and incentives, and appreciate HB 2528's focus on the latter, with its proposed income or corporate excise tax credit for purchasing commercial-grade battery-powered leaf blowers and related equipment.

However, in considering this bill we urge you to examine the full spectrum of effective incentives available to support a just transition, as well as new funding sources such as the Inflation Reduction Act. We support a coordinated program that delivers the most value for taxpayer dollars. Toward that end, this bill could direct the appropriate agency to establish incentives that benefit small contractors as well as large multi-state companies, and that reflect state priorities.

Examples elsewhere include point-of-sale rebates in California, matching grants in Minnesota, and tax credits for retailers (instead of landscaping firms) in Colorado. Tool trade-ins could be used to take gas-powered equipment out of circulation rather than simply adding new electric tools.

Quiet Clean PDX hopes this bill can be a start toward a thoughtful and just transition to safer, cleaner, and quieter electric and manual tools.

Thank you for your time.

Judy Walton

On behalf of Quiet Clean PDX - <https://www.quietcleanpdx.org>