

Submitter: Aaron Wolf

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure: SB525

The Committee on Energy and Environment should understand that these measures are already doing far from enough. In order to support a healthy and sustainable way of life for the citizens of Oregon, we need to make dramatic changes. These limits on small nonroad engines are extremely important and need to be far stronger. Why have a limit to cities of populations over 75,000?

I live in Oregon City, and I regularly see (and hear and breath!) gas-powered leaf blowers. The vast majority (and the noisiest) cases are on commercial properties and generally used by landscaping companies. Sometimes, the offender is the City staff blowing in parks and City properties. It is extremely rare for any case to be accomplishing anything at all. I can reliably predict that nine times out of ten, the place being blown is already clear. The blowing is focusing on a few odd leaves and is basically producing awful dust, and just moving a few leaves around for no reason. Commonly, I see blowing in places that don't even make the tiniest bit of sense such as blowing on soil around bushes.

I have occasionally spoken up. For example, The Abernathy Center is an event space. They have an unquestioned idea that everyone having a wedding or gathering there wants to see no odd leaf or anything other than artificially plain landscaping. They do not ask any of their clients. They were very gracious when I contacted them to suggest this. I believe near-zero of their clients would opt-in to leaf-blowing from an informed perspective. No organization or engaged couple is going to say that they want their even to produce enormous noise and air pollution just to avoid seeing a few dried leaves on the ground. And on top of all of this, every single use of blowers could be safely and easily accomplished with rakes and brooms.

In short, private citizens are not the main source of this problem. Workers are not themselves choosing blowers either, at least not thoughtfully. Almost all blowing is happening because of governments and companies that simply put them on the task list. It is make-work. It is done ceremoniously to check off boxes and fill work time. Never do people consider the harms and costs when deciding whether to blow. They don't seem to even consider the benefits. They blow out of what amounts to bureaucratic habit combined with a few misguided ideas about serving other people's imagined priorities.

As soon as these blowers are gone from our world, nobody will miss them. Do not give any credence to anyone defending them. This is a rare case with very little nuance. Leaf blowers are a harmful nuisance that have no benefits and which affect

enormous numbers of people.

Do not limit bans to larger cities. Leaf blowers should not be allowed within any urban area at all. Short of that, please add a legal requirement that all companies make blowing opt-in. Anyone who wants blowing should have to explicitly be informed of alternatives and understand the noise and air pollution impacts. Default leaf-blowing should not be allowed.

Thank you for working on this issue.