

March 23, 2023

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Findley, members of the Committee:

I am Linda Craig. I live in Portland, and I volunteer with Metro Climate Action Team (MCAT). MCAT is a group of volunteers helping to promote state-wide policies that will help Oregonians adapt to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I am writing in support of SB 525.

Many have testified that small, off-road petroleum-fueled engines are noisy and polluting. They are harmful to neighbors in their proximity and workers who must use them. We support those reasons for discontinuing their use.

They should also be discontinued because they contribute to climate change. Part of the pollution emitted by engines that run on petroleum-based fuels is in the form of small particulates black carbon (BC). You can think of black carbon as “soot” or as the particulate matter in engine exhaust that gives it color. Because the small engines addressed in SB 525 usually burn inefficiently and are not filtered, they emit far more pollution than you would expect from their size. *A consumer-grade leaf blower emits more pollutants than a 6,200-pound than a Ford F-150 truck, according to tests conducted by Edmunds' InsideLine.com.*

Black carbon has been recognized by science as a contributor to climate change over at least the past 20 years, and in 2013, it was confirmed as the second largest human influence on climate change next to carbon dioxide. (*DEQ, The Concerns about Diesel Engine Exhaust, Feb. 2015*)

Black carbon is short-lived in the atmosphere, usually from days to weeks, compared to at least several hundred years for carbon dioxide, so reductions in black carbon, and other short-lived climate pollutants like methane, can result in significant near-term climate benefits. Action on black carbon now can provide climate change relief worth one to two decades of action on carbon dioxide, greatly accelerating the rate at which Oregon can meet its climate goals; and improving our chances for staying below 1.5 degrees C. warming.

Some might say that banning petroleum-fueled leaf blowers will make an insignificant dent in greenhouse gas emissions, but SB 525 is sensible legislation because cleaner, quieter alternatives are readily available in the marketplace. The tools affected by SB 525 are polluting far more than their contribution to the economy. Let's have Oregon join California which has already passed a similar bill with an effective date of 2024.

Please advance SB 525 for our health and for the planet.

Respectfully,
Linda Craig

