

Testimony in Support of SB 525-1

Submitter: Brooke Bachelor, DO, RN

Committee: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Measure: SB 525-1: Directs Environmental Quality Commission to adopt standards prohibiting engine exhaust and evaporative emissions from new small nonroad engines beginning January 1, 2026, unless a later date is required by federal Clean Air Act.

Dear Chair Sollman and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,

I come to you to share many first-hand perspectives. I am a future Mother concerned about the world in which my children will live, a gardener and hiker who finds great solace and comfort from my time outdoors, and I am your neighbor walking side by side with you right now.

As a family physician in Portland and Beaverton who has the great responsibility and privilege of providing health care to people from all backgrounds and from various socioeconomic circumstances, I feel it is a moral imperative to testify in strong support of this bill of behalf of myself, my patients, and the health of our communities in Oregon as a whole.

I come to you to ask for your assistance with phasing out gas-powered leaf blowers because they create many public health hazards which are experienced in inequitable ways around our community.

Gas-powered leaf blowers disturb neighborhood calm and peace. They also cause hearing damage for those operating the machinery, who frequently lack protective equipment such as adequate ear or respiratory protection. They also release significant amounts of fine particulate matter from fossil fuel exhaust into the air in our yards and communities which, in turn, creates significant health consequences down the road.

With readily-available, affordable, quieter electric alternatives that do not require fossil fuel and are better for our environment, in line with Oregon's larger long-term goals.

Put simply, to support this bill is to support small shifts for big positive results and that are in line with Oregon's larger long-term goals.

I am concerned that time is running out to make the changes we need to make. We really need support from the top down to catalyze this shift in Oregon.

Please take action now and support this SB525-1. You have the capability of creating big positive impacts today by pushing for practical alternatives to current hazardous practices!

Brooke Bachelor, DO, RN

#environmental equity

This is also an issue of environmental equity. Gas-powered leaf blowers cause such significant harm not only to us, but often unjustly inflict adverse health effects such as hearing loss, direct exposure and irreversible damage to carcinogens, of those who often have less protection to begin with. I want to live in a Portland that lifts, not harms.

I cannot understand how any responsible individual or organization can continue to promote the use of fossil fuel burning landscape and lawn care equipment. We are facing an existential climate crisis that has us circling the drain. Catastrophic storms, floods, droughts and wildfires are getting worse all the time.

I am writing as a member of Quiet Clean PDX whose mission is to phase out gas- powered leaf blowers in Oregon.

Many landscape maintenance service providers continue to use two-stroke gas- powered leaf blowers that the rest of the world is increasingly leaving behind. These leaf blowers generate toxic air pollution in our neighborhoods, schools, and public spaces, and noise that far exceeds health and safety standards. These practices come with high costs for our health and environment. Most severely impacted are the workers who operate gas powered leaf blowers.

We ask that you to support our efforts and support the amended version of SB 525 that, when passed, will phase out the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in within the urban growth boundary of a city with a population of 75,000 or greater.

Thank you for taking a major step toward a quieter, cleaner, safer Oregon. Please support SB 525-1.