



STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF HB 2067 A RESPONSIBLE TRANSITION TO BATTERY LEAF BLOWERS

The Oregon Landscape Contractors Association (OLCA) and the National Association of Landscape Professionals support the reduction of carbon emissions from gas powered leaf blowers. However, we must do so in a responsible manner that mitigates the negative financial impact on the landscape industry and their customers that relies significantly on the ability to use high performing leaf blowers.

Leaf blowers are essential for landscape industry professionals. This is because these machines are efficient tools for cleaning up leaves, grass, fertilizer granules, and other small debris from lawn and landscape sites. Since their development in the 1970s, to a large extent, leaf blowers have supplanted brooms, hoses, and rakes. Leaf blowers even perform functions that no other tool can handle effectively, such as cleaning areas covered by rock, gravel, bark, or mulch. Leaf blowers save enormous amounts of time and the associated labor cost charged to landscape industry customers. Most estimates suggest that it takes at least five times as long to clean a typical landscape site with a broom and rake than it does with a power leaf blower.

Performance

Equipment performance and run-time are common concerns for landscape professionals and present technological challenges that must be overcome for widespread use of electric leaf blowers. Unlike a homeowner that uses an electric powered leaf blower for less than an hour per week, the landscape industry is commercially using this equipment daily, under rigorous conditions and during long durations. Also, many landscape professionals operate on commercial properties like corporate campuses, parks, resorts and other large green spaces which demand stronger performance and power capabilities. Unfortunately, the electric leaf blowers currently available are not capable of this sort of use pattern.

Data provided by one major equipment manufacture that produces both gas and electric equipment illustrates the challenge. In a side-by-side comparison of the strongest electric leaf blower compared to the typical commercial gas-powered blower, the electric model provides less than half the blower power.

Equipment and Infrastructure Cost

While the cost of purchasing the actual equipment is not that different, the price for battery blowers starts to jump significantly when you factor in the cost of batteries, the cost to change and retrofit shops and how to handle inferior products in the midst of a labor crisis. A typical high-capacity battery lasts 20-45 minutes depending on blower force needed. In many situations, 2-3 batteries would be needed per day. The cost of a battery blower and 3 batteries is triple the cost of a typical gas-powered blower.

Charging batteries is another challenge and cost impact. The infrastructure to charge batteries overnight could challenge the electrical infrastructure of a contractor's facility. This is difficult to quantify but a true challenge to any medium to large-sized landscape contractor. Electric leaf blowers lack the same performance capabilities detailed above and require frequent battery changes which reduces the productivity and efficiency of a

landscape crew in the field. This reduction in productivity puts landscape companies in a tough spot since they are already faced with a historic work force crisis.

All of this considered together (equipment cost, battery cost, increased labor) represents significant cost that would have to be born by the end user of the service, the landscape contractor customer. It has been estimated that the use of current technology battery blowers would increase the typical maintenance cost by 15-25%

The Solution

Similar to the electrical vehicles, blower and other small engine technology is rapidly improving. And, as the technology advances, battery equipment will improve in function and reduce in cost. This will naturally facilitate gas-powered equipment to be phased out. As with cars, we also believe customer demand will naturally increase the use of electric powered leaf blowers.

The professional landscape industry supports HB 2067 which creates a Commercial Landscape Equipment Rebate program. It is designed to help offset the costs to commercial contractors that convert to battery powered in an effort to achieve greater energy efficiencies and to reduce noise pollution...especially in cities and counties that ban gas powered blowers. The concept is modeled after the successful residential solar rebate administered by the Oregon Department of Energy.

STIHL BR 800



BLOWER COST \$649.00

- **Blowing Force:** 42 Newtons
- **Sound Pressure Rating:** 78 db(A)
- **Max. Air Velocity:** 239 mph
- **Air Volume at Nozzle:** 912cfm

COST \$650

STIHL BGA 300



BLOWER COST \$1,350 w/o Battery | BATTERY \$1, 299

- **Blowing Force:** 26 Newtons
- **Sound Pressure Rating:** 59 db(A)
- **Max. Air Velocity:** 192 mph
- **Air Volume at Nozzle:** 571 cfm
- **Approx. Runtime:** up to 140 minutes (3-4 needed per day)

TOTAL INVESTMENT \$5,247

With 3 Replacement Batteries