CONNECTICUT LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

TESTIMONY AS GENERAL COMMENTS FOR HB 6263
AAC THE USE AND PURCHASE OF GAS-POWERED HAND-HELD OR BACKPACK LEAF BLOWERS BY STATE AGENCIES.
March 17, 2025

**To:** Honorable Co-Chairs Sen. Lopes and Rep. Parker, and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

**From**: Lori Brown, Executive Director, CT League of Conservation Voters

CTLCV appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding House Bill 6263, which would phase in a ban on the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in the state. We offer testimony regarding the environmental and health concerns associated with gas-powered leaf blowers and the ongoing state efforts to transition to cleaner equipment.

Gas-powered leaf blowers (GLBs) are significant contributors to air and noise pollution, posing serious risks to human health and the environment. These machines are known as "super-polluters" due to their disproportionate emissions of harmful pollutants compared to their size and usage.

Please reference our 2025 Briefing Paper for more details on the following:

Toxic Emissions and Greenhouse Gases

- Gas-powered leaf blowers combust only about 70% of their fuel, releasing a mixture of carcinogens, greenhouse gases, nitrogen oxides (NOx), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
- They emit hazardous pollutants such as 1,3-butadiene, benzene, and formaldehyde, all of which are well-documented carcinogens.
- They also release fine particulate matter (PM2.5), which is linked to respiratory diseases, cardiovascular conditions, and premature death.

Comparison to Vehicle Emissions

- According to a 2023 U.S. Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) report, gas-powered lawn and garden equipment in Fairfield County alone emitted more than 120 tons of PM2.5 annually, an amount equivalent to the emissions of over 1.28 million passenger cars.
- In 2020, gas-powered lawn equipment across Connecticut emitted nearly 338,000 tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) and 254 tons of methane, a greenhouse gas over 80 times more potent than CO2 in terms of global warming potential.

Health Risks and Noise Pollution

- The noise from GLBs can easily exceed 90 decibels (dB) at a distance of 50 feet, a level that can cause permanent hearing loss with prolonged exposure.

- In addition to hearing damage, excessive noise from GLBs has been linked to tinnitus, hypertension, strokes, cardiovascular disease, sleep disturbances, increased stress levels, and concentration issues in children.

**Noise pollution is often overlooked. CTLCV thanks the Environment Committee for bringing awareness to the public health impacts and efforts to tackle excessive noise pollution.**

Transportation is also one of the primary sources of excessive chronic noise, which is an environmental stressor affecting a substantial portion of the population.

No person can legally sell or purchase a new vehicle which produces above a certain maximum decibel level, yet automotive parts stores can sell products to later attach to the vehicles which violate these decibel limits.

Aftermarket automotive dealers sell so-called **"burble tube" kits** to modify mufflers to produce loud 'race car' sounds. This is despite CGS section 14-80 prohibiting noise amplifying devices on mufflers and exhaust systems.

Sanctions are triggered under state and local vehicular noise ordinances. However, the devices are relatively inexpensive and their use has multiplied exponentially. This plagues the limited municipal police resources needed to enforce the law.

The burden of environmental noise stressors is not uniformly distributed. It is associated with proximity to roads and public transportation and is higher among communities with mid-to-low incomes per capita.

CTLCV suggests legislators consider expanding the ban on the sale of leaf blowers to the aftermarket sale of devices designed solely to amplify noise emitted by vehicles.

Thank you for considering our comments to help reduce both air and noise pollution plaguing our communities.

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