

# Environment Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6263

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE AND PURCHASE OF GAS-POWERED

**Title:** HAND-HELD OR BACKPACK LEAF BLOWERS BY STATE AGENCIES.

**Vote Date:** 3/24/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/17/2025

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee

### CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Aimee Berger-Girvalo, 111th Dist.  
Sen. Julie Kushner, 24th Dist.  
Sen. Ceci Maher, 26th Dist.  
Rep. Michael "MJ" Shannon, 117th Dist.  
Rep. Laurie Sweet, 91st Dist.  
Rep. Hector Arzeno, 151st Dist.  
Rep. Steven Winter, 94th Dist.  
Rep. William Heffernan, 115th Dist.  
Rep. Jonathan Jacobson, 148th Dist.  
Rep. Josh Elliott, 88th Dist.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill prohibits the commercial sale of gas-powered leaf blowers for state agencies, with the long-term goal of removing them from the state entirely and replacing them with electric-powered leaf blowers. Gas-powered blowers are quite harmful to the environment owing to the relatively vast amount of greenhouse gasses and other chemicals that they emit into the atmosphere. They also cause harm to residents' physical health thanks to the resulting noise pollution. By preventing the sale and purchase of gas leaf blowers, this bill would make Connecticut healthier for both its environment and its citizens.

### Substitute Language LCO 6801

The substitute language changes the effective date from upon passage, to October 1, 2025; removes the requirement that the DAS commissioner and each municipality develop a phase-

out plan for gas powered leaf blowers; adds in the requirement that, within appropriations, DAS, DEEP, and DOT purchase electric push lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and lawn trimmers; removes the prohibition on the sale, use, offer for sale or distribution of gas powered leaf blowers; adds in the requirement that the three departments prepare bidding documents; adds in subsection (c) concerning certain exceptions.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Bryan Cafferelli, Commissioner, Department of Consumer Protection**

The Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) submitted testimony expressing some concerns regarding this bill. While the bill prohibits of commercial sale of new gas-powered leaf blowers, it also targets the use and distribution, meaning that consumers who purchase them before it goes into effect can be arrested if they use it. DCP suggests removing language targeting use and distribution, as well as removing enforcement authority over consumer usage. While the bill designates DCP as the enforcement agency, it lacks language specifying what the agency's powers are for this type of violation. The DCP also comments on the additional resources required to enforce the actions outlined in the bill.

### **Michelle Gilman, Commissioner, Department of Administrative Services**

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS), the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), and the Department of Transportation (CTDOT) submitted a combined testimony expressing concerns about the bill's requirements. Since the bill does not account for functional devices after the deadline, there will be many pieces of equipment prematurely retired. The cost of replacing them with non-gas alternatives will result in initial and ongoing costs across state agencies, none of which are accounted for in the Governor's proposed budget. Regarding specific agency concerns, DAS is concerned about the impact this may have on businesses contracting with the state, as many small companies will be forced to foot the cost of new equipment. In the long-term, this may result in a loss of businesses available to bid on state contracts. While DEEP already uses electric equipment for many situations, they rely on gas-powered leaf blowers for wildfire suppression. They are worried about the time it will take to recharge batteries, especially in remote wildfire locations. CTDOT share similar concerns as they use gas leaf blowers for long clean-up activities, therefore, the current battery life makes them near impossible to use.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Rep. Bobby Gibson, 15<sup>th</sup> District.**

Representative Gibson comments on the number of constituents reaching out about noise pollution, explaining the mental and medical harm it can cause. He supports this bill but suggests expanding it to ban the sale of any devices, like mufflers and exhausts, that create unhealthy noise pollution.

### **Joyce Leiz, Executive Director, The Connecticut Audubon Society**

In addition to reducing noise pollution, Ms. Leiz explains that electric leaf blowers will have a positive impact on the birds that make their homes in Connecticut. The acoustic impact from gas leaf blowers has a stronger reverberating impact and travels farther than electric ones, harming birds' hearing, and ability to make song.

The following submitted testimony in support of this bill, all going through the environmental and health issues associated with gas-powered leaf blowers. According to their testimony, gas-powered lawn and garden equipment can emit more pollution than gas-powered cars. The greenhouse gasses they emit are almost a hundred times more harmful to the environment, and increase global warming, than carbon dioxide. In addition to the environment, gas-powered blowers can directly harm Connecticut citizens with high levels of noise pollution. Some effects intense noise pollution has on residents include hearing damage, strokes, and cardiovascular disease.

**Julianna Larue, Organizer, Sierra Club Connecticut**

**Lori Brown, Executive Director, League of Conservation Voters**

**179 citizens expressed support.**

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Valerie Stolfi Collins, Executive Director, Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association**

The Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association (CRPA) expresses opposition for this bill thanks to the labor and cost, arguing that it will not result in enough emission reduction to justify the mandate. According to CRPA, many powerful electric leaf blowers require high recharge times, still produce significant noise pollution, and many run off fossil fuels. They recommend developing a study to efficiently transition to electric-powered equipment first, researching things like proper disposal and longer life batteries.

**55 citizen expressed opposition.**

**Reported by: Phoebe Mann**

**Date: April 3, 2025**