

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-319 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF BATTERY-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS
AND SIMILAR EQUIPMENT BY THE STATE AND MUNICIPALITIES.

Vote Date: 3/18/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/4/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee

CO-SPONSORS:

Rep. Hector Arzeno, 151st Dist.

Sen. Julie Kushner, 24th Dist.

Rep. Anne M. Hughes, 135th Dist.

Rep. Geraldo C. Reyes, 75th Dist.

Rep. Nick Gauthier, 38th Dist.

Rep. Renee LaMark Muir, 36th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would prohibit the use of gas-powered leaf blowers on all state property and require State departments to replace lawn mowers, lawn trimmers, and leaf blowers with electric hand-held or push alternatives as the existing equipment expires. In order to, prolonged exposure to high noise levels, toxic emissions, and particulate matter.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

Substitute language reactivates the Lawn Equipment Exchange Fund for municipalities and regional schools and directs the Connecticut Green Bank to create loan programs to help commercial landscapers purchase or lease battery-powered lawn equipment.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

In a **joint statement** the following departments expressed opposition to the bill. They stated that while their agencies appreciate the intent of the bill in accordance with state statutes and Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 21-3, the bill would, however, impose ongoing costs on the state and on electric ratepayers in the public benefits charge. They have reservations since the proposal does not specify the entities eligible to receive the ratepayer-supported funding for the electrification of lawn equipment, nor does it contain a cap or other fiscal parameters for the use of such funds. In addition, replacing all state-owned and contractor-

operated leaf blowers with battery-powered equipment and the necessary associated infrastructure would result in both upfront capital costs and ongoing operational expenses across multiple state agencies. They highlight that the costs are not reflected in the states budget and would require further evaluation and that while exceptions are made to the states replacement, there is no specification on the availability of functional equivalencies. As for the specific agencies concerns, DAS is concerned about the potential impact this legislation may have on businesses that contract with the state. As they noted that many of their contracted landscapers are small businesses that can't always afford buying new costly appliances which can lead them to stop or put a decrease in offering certain services and therefore lead to a decrease in the number of businesses available to bid on state contracts. The vendors that are able to continue providing services would then pass to the state their additional costs in the form of increased contracts costs. The CTDOT mentions that it is a 24/7 operation that requires equipment and supplies to be available at a moment's notice, they utilize leaf blowers in a variety of applications within its ongoing maintenance activities, construction projects, emergency response, and snow removal operations. With short battery life, lengthy recharging times, and no power supplies at most locations CTDOT staff respond to, gas-powered leaf blowers are the only feasible tool available for CTDOT's agency use today. They express that they would like to further continue discussion on the bill's proponents but urge the committee to oppose the bill for the reasons listed above.

Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner, CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)

Garrett Eucalitto, Commissioner, Department of Transportation (DOT)

Michelle Gilman, Commissioner, Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Holley Atkinson & Stephen Plumlee, Co-owners, Northwest Corner Farm

The co-owners of the Northwest Corner Farm are in support of the bill, as their farm is largely powered by solar energy and are committed to the transition to use equipment that supports renewable power (electric farm vehicle, electric leaf blower and mower, etc.). They note that with the Federal government rapidly disabling and defunding the essential transition to renewables, it's important that we make the necessary changes at the state and local level.

Jamie Banks, President, Quiet Communities Inc.

The president of Quiet Communities, mentioned that their company has conducted research and worked with the American Green Zone Alliance (AGZA) to help transition the land care industry from gas equipment to low noise, zero emissions equipment through workshops, ND equipment demonstrations. They mention that the benefits of transitioning from gas powered blowers to electric battery powered blowers are considerable and include the following: Improvement in the lives and health of workers and the public, promotion of social equity and relevance for all socioeconomic sectors of the state, creation of healthier ecosystems for plants and pollinators, improvement in environmental quality, and long-term economic benefits. They highlight that SB 319 offers a sensible phased, multi-year approach to making a successful transition by having the State and municipalities lead-by-example, offering a state training and demonstration program, providing for a municipal voluntary lawn equipment exchange fund, providing access to capital and rebates for landscapers and residents.

Gaboury Benoit, Executive Director, Environment and Human Health, Inc. (EHHI)

EHHI supports the bill, which creates a phased plan to transition state and municipal landscaping from gas-powered to battery-powered equipment. They mention that the bill starts with procurement rules for state agencies, expands to contractors, and eventually bans the sale (by 2029) and use (by 2030) of gas-powered leaf blowers, with some exemptions. The goal is to reduce air and noise pollution while allowing time for adaptation. From a public health standpoint, the shift is important because gas-powered leaf blowers emit harmful pollutants that worsen asthma, heart health, and air quality—especially in vulnerable communities. They also produce high noise levels linked to stress, sleep disruption, and learning issues. Battery-powered equipment significantly reduces these impacts. EHHI emphasizes that **implementation is key**, highlighting two critical components: **Green Bank financing**: Needs to provide accessible, low-interest loans and support to help municipalities and small or minority-owned landscaping businesses afford the transition. **Equipment exchange program**: Should be efficient and easy to use, enabling quick trade-in of gas equipment for battery-powered alternatives with minimal bureaucracy. The bill includes funding (2026–2030) to support this transition and draws on regional examples like Vermont, showing the approach is feasible. Overall, they believe that the bill is a well-designed, practical policy that improves public health, reduces pollution, supports small businesses, and provides clear market direction—but its success depends on strong, accessible financing and efficient implementation programs.

Karen Camporeale, Vice Chair Legislative and Rules, Stamford Board of Representative

As a member of the Stamford Board of Representatives, Camporeale notes that they have heard testimony from hundreds of residents urging them to address the harms caused by gas-powered leaf blowers. They also heard directly from landscapers who have already transitioned to electric equipment and demonstrated that the investment paid for itself quickly through fuel savings, reduced maintenance, and operational efficiencies. Camporeale, expresses that this issue disproportionately impacts minority workers, who bear the brunt of prolonged exposure to high noise levels, toxic emissions, and particulate matter. Further emphasizes that gas-powered leaf blowers contribute to air pollution, including carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and fine particulate matter, while also creating excessive noise pollution that affects both physical and mental well-being. They believe that moving toward cleaner, quieter electric alternatives improves public health, worker safety, and overall community quality of life.

Ruth Canovi, Director of Advocacy, American Lung Association-CT

The American Lung Association highlights worsening air quality in Connecticut, noting that nearly half of Americans live with unhealthy air and that the New Haven–Hartford–Waterbury region has seen increased ozone and particle pollution. No county in the state scored above a D for short-term particle pollution, and many failed for ozone. They expressed that about 392,000 Connecticut residents with asthma are especially vulnerable, along with children, older adults, low-income communities, and communities of color. Air pollution is linked to serious health issues like asthma attacks, heart disease, strokes, lung cancer, and premature death. This goes in hand with their stance that gas-powered lawn and landscaping equipment are a significant and growing source of pollution. They mentioned that studies show that just one hour of use can produce as much smog-forming pollution as driving hundreds to over a thousand miles. The organization supports the bill since they believe it is an important step to

reduce pollution, improve public health, and address environmental inequities by accelerating the shift to cleaner, electric equipment.

Gregg Carey, Northeastern Representative, PELLEN America, Inc.

The representative of PELLEN America, Gregg Carey, states that they support SB 319 and highlights its long-standing focus on battery-powered landscaping and agricultural tools. The company argues that its electric equipment matches or exceeds the performance of gas-powered tools while eliminating harmful emissions and reducing noise. It also emphasizes cost advantages, noting that electric tools save money on fuel, maintenance, and downtime, leading to better profitability for landscapers. PELLEN reports that users benefit from quieter, cleaner working conditions and improved client satisfaction. Their battery systems are designed to work across multiple tools, making the transition easier. Overall, PELLEN supports the bill because battery-powered equipment is already a practical, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly alternative—and continued technological improvements will make the transition even easier in the future.

The following individuals and residents support the bill and state their reasons: Yaniv Chen, a neurologist and environmental advocate, and Sarah Evans, an environmental health scientist, argues that gas-powered leaf blowers (GLBs) pose serious health and environmental risks. Chen and the Health and Pollution Subcommittee at Sustainable Fairfield state that GLBs are a major and growing source of air pollution, emitting toxic chemicals and fine particulate matter linked to heart disease, strokes, cancer, respiratory illness, and neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's. GLBs also produce significant greenhouse gases and noise pollution, contributing to climate change, hearing damage, anxiety, and reduced cognitive focus. Their use has expanded rapidly in Connecticut, making them one of the largest pollution sources in neighborhoods. In addition to harming human health, GLBs damage ecosystems by spreading allergens and pesticides, degrading soil, and disrupting wildlife and pollinators. Vulnerable groups—especially children, the elderly, and landscaping workers (often immigrants)—face the greatest exposure and risk. The committee emphasizes that electric alternatives are effective, quieter, and commercially viable. They advocate for a phased 3-year ban on GLBs, with municipalities leading the transition and strong enforcement measures in place.

Yaniv Chen, MDCM, Chair, Health and Pollution Subcommittee, Sustainable Fairfield
Sarah Evans, PhD MPH, Associate Professor, Department of Environmental Medicine,
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, NY

Dan Delventhal, CEO and Founder, MowGreen LLC

Delventhal for MowGreen strongly supports SB 319, which would stop state purchases of gas leaf blowers (GLBs) by 2027 and phase out their use entirely by 2030. MowGreen believes that this timeline is reasonable and allows ample transition time, especially since effective electric alternatives are already widely available. Drawing on nearly two decades of experience operating a fully electric landscaping business in Connecticut, MowGreen states that electric leaf blowers (ELBs) are practical, affordable, and profitable. Their company maintains competitive pricing while avoiding gas equipment, demonstrating that electric tools can meet commercial needs across all seasons. They emphasize that electric blowers are quieter, non-polluting, and cost significantly less to operate—often delivering a 10–50% return on investment due to lower fuel and maintenance costs. While upfront costs are higher, these are typically recovered within a few years. Electric equipment is increasingly powerful, with models now matching or exceeding gas blower performance. MowGreen also

argues that concerns about battery life, charging logistics, maintenance, and fire risk are overstated or outdated. Charging is inexpensive and manageable, maintenance is generally easier than with gas equipment, and safety risks are relatively low. They highlight broader benefits of the legislation, including reduced air and noise pollution, improved public health, and fewer greenhouse gas emissions. They estimate that banning GLBs in a typical town could significantly reduce emissions equivalent to thousands of cars. While acknowledging environmental concerns related to battery production and disposal, they argue these impacts are smaller and more manageable than the harms caused by gas-powered equipment. Overall, MowGreen concludes that transitioning to electric landscaping equipment is both economically and environmentally beneficial, and that statewide legislation is necessary to accelerate adoption and avoid piecemeal local regulation.

Elizabeth Dempsey, Co-Chair, Quiet Yards Greenwich

Co-chair of the Quiet Yards Greenwich, Elizabeth Dempsey, states that beyond well-known health and environmental harms, gas leaf blowers (GLBs) also impose significant economic costs. Following Greenwich’s decision to restrict GLBs, Dempsey highlights that switching to electric leaf blowers (ELBs) can substantially reduce expenses for municipalities, landscaping businesses, and residents. Electric landscaping offers major cost savings: ELBs have about 75% lower operating costs, require little to no maintenance, and can deliver a return on investment of around 50%, often paying for themselves within 1–2 years. Users report cutting budgets and saving thousands per season after switching. In addition to cost benefits, ELBs are now efficient and practical, with performance matching or exceeding gas-powered equipment. They are easy to use, simple to recharge, and supported by affordable charging and storage solutions. Overall, Dempsey notes that adopting electric equipment is not only better for health and the environment, but also a financially smart move that improves affordability at both local government and consumer levels.

The Sierra Club Connecticut supports SB 319, a bill to phase out gas-powered leaf blowers (GLBs) in favor of battery-powered equipment, citing major health, environmental, and climate benefits. They note that air pollution is already a serious issue in Connecticut, with several counties receiving failing grades, and GLBs significantly contribute to harmful emissions like fine particulate matter, smog-forming pollutants, and greenhouse gases. GLBs are described as highly polluting and noisy, harming human health (increasing risks of asthma, heart disease, and respiratory illness), contributing to climate change, and disrupting communities and wildlife through excessive noise. The bill proposes a phased, practical transition. The Sierra Club emphasizes that the bill includes reasonable exemptions (e.g., emergencies, public safety work) and promotes a “lead-by-example” approach where state action drives broader adoption. They also advocate strengthening the bill by funding a municipal equipment exchange program (LEEF 2.0) to help towns replace gas equipment with electric alternatives, and by providing financial support—such as loans and rebates—for landscapers and residents to ease the transition. Overall, the Sierra Club argues that SB 319 is a balanced, achievable plan that will reduce pollution, protect public health, support small businesses, and create clear, consistent statewide standards.

Julianna Larue, Organizer, Sierra Club CT

Susan Eastwood, Volunteer Leader, Sierra Club

Dona Merrill, President, Pollinator Pathway

Pollinator Pathway supports SB 319. The organization, dedicated to protecting pollinators and the environment, highlights the harmful impact of gas-powered blowers, which release

pollutants and excessive noise that disrupt both human health and wildlife, particularly ground-nesting bees essential for pollination. While they advocate for minimizing leaf removal to protect pollinator habitats, they recognize that some removal is necessary, and the method used matters. The bill's phased "Lead by Example" approach, starting with state operations and extending by 2030, is seen as a practical and reasonable path to transition to cleaner, quieter electric equipment. Pollinator Pathway urges the committee to support the bill for its benefits to public health, ecosystems, and the economy.

Stanley Heller, Administrator, Promoting Enduring Peace

Representing, Promoting Enduring Peace, Heller states that gas-powered lawn equipment, especially leaf blowers, must be replaced with electric alternatives due to the urgent climate crisis and their significant greenhouse gas emissions. Heller emphasizes that concerns about cost, efficiency, and convenience are secondary to the need to prevent severe climate tipping points. Electric equipment is presented as a viable solution, with examples like Rye, New York successfully maintaining large properties using battery-powered tools. The switch would also reduce noise pollution, improving quality of life for residents, and protect workers from prolonged exposure to harmful emissions linked to serious health risks. Finally, they suggest that if transition costs are a concern, the state should provide financial support—such as rebates or funding—to help landscaping businesses adopt electric equipment.

Mary Hogue, Chair, Fairfield Forestry Committee

Mary Hogue from the Fairfield Forestry Committee supports SB 319, advocating for a transition from gas-powered leaf blowers to battery-powered equipment due to environmental, health, and quality-of-life benefits. They highlight that gas-powered blowers contribute to poor air quality in Fairfield County by emitting harmful pollutants, including carcinogens and fine particulate matter, and create excessive noise. The committee also emphasizes ecological impacts, noting that heavy leaf blowing—especially with gas equipment—disrupts vital habitats for native pollinators like ground-nesting bees, which are essential for many crops. While some leaf removal is necessary, they encourage minimizing it and avoiding highly polluting methods. They support the bill's phased "lead by example" approach, where the state transitions first, aligning with normal equipment replacement cycles. Evidence from municipalities and landscaping operations shows that electric equipment is effective, quieter, and can reduce long-term costs despite higher upfront investment.

Daniel Mabe, Founder, American Green Zone Alliance (AGZA)

The American Green Zone Alliance (AGZA) supports SB 319, which aligns with their mission to promote low-impact, zero-emission technologies in the landscape maintenance industry. AGZA has spent nearly two decades working with municipalities, businesses, and agencies to reduce pollution and improve public health through the adoption of battery-electric equipment. Their Green Zone Certification program has demonstrated that electric landscape tools can replace gas-powered ones, reducing air pollution, greenhouse gases, and noise. While the bill addresses the higher upfront costs of electric equipment through the Connecticut Green Bank loan program, AGZA recommends adding a robust gas-to-electric trade-in program for municipalities and businesses to ease the transition. They also emphasize the importance of workforce retraining and technical support to ensure the long-term success and safety of the shift to electric operations.

Bernard Pelletier, Vice President, People's Action for Clean Energy (PACE)

PACE supports the environmental and public health goals of SB 319 but only partially backs the bill. They support Sections 1–3, which: Transition state agencies to electric equipment over time, with flexibility for different operational needs, restart and expand the Lawn Equipment Exchange Fund to help municipalities and potentially commercial landscapers switch to electric tools, and provide financing through the Connecticut Green Bank tailored to small landscaping businesses. However, PACE opposes Sections 4–6, arguing that: Funding rebates through the Systems Benefits Charge could strain existing programs and raise electricity costs. Bans on the sale and use of gas-powered leaf blowers may create challenges with enforcement, fairness, and impacts on small businesses. Overall, PACE favors a gradual, incentive-based transition to electric equipment rather than strict bans, emphasizing financial support and flexibility to ensure a practical and equitable shift.

Lilliana Sarju, Policy and Outreach Coordinator, CT League of Conservation Voters (CTLCV)

The Connecticut League of Conservation Voters (CTLCV) supports SB 319, emphasizing that gas-powered leaf blowers (GLBs) are highly polluting and harmful to both public health and the environment. They note that GLBs emit significant amounts of toxic pollutants and greenhouse gases—sometimes comparable to a car driving hundreds of miles in just one hour—which contribute to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. GLBs also create substantial noise pollution, disrupting communities and wildlife, and causing stress and potential hearing damage. CTLCV highlights that the bill includes financial support—such as loans and rebates—to help small businesses and residents transition to battery-powered equipment, making the shift more accessible and equitable. Overall, they argue that electric alternatives are now reliable and ready for widespread use.

The following individuals and organizations also expressed their support for SB319.

Anne Schmidt, Environment & Climate Legislative Specialist, League of Women Voters of CT (LWVCT)

Alan Siniscalchi, President, CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions, Inc.

Kimberly Stoner, Director of Advocacy, CT Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)

Bob Wall, Chair, Sustainable Fairfield

Shirley McCarthy, Md, PhD, Professor, Yale Medical School

Dave Rauch, Secretary, Meriden Conservation Commission

Sharon Huttner, Branford Planning and Zoning Commission

Rozanne Gates, Owner, The Legacy Project USA

Caroline Grist, member, CT River Towns Quiet Lawns

Victor Federico, Director, Grounds and Facilities, Town of Rye, NY

Myra Klockenbrink, Greenwich Pollinator Pathway

Fern Galperin, Leaf Blowers, Pollinator Pathway Stamford

Over 180 citizens expressed their support for SB 319.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Joseph Arnone, Board Member, CT Grounds Keepers Association, Inc. (CGKA) Dave Christensen, President, CGKA

Board member Arnone and President Christensen of CGKA oppose SB 319, arguing that it would create financial and practical burdens for landscaping professionals and taxpayers. They claim battery-powered equipment is not yet as reliable or efficient as gas-powered tools, leading to reduced productivity and higher costs due to equipment purchases and increased labor. These added costs, they argue, would ultimately be passed on to taxpayers. While supportive of the idea of transitioning to electric, they believe the technology is not ready and that professionals—not legislation—should decide when to make the switch.

Luke Barone, Owner Operator, Barone Services LLC

Barone, owner of Barone Services LLC, a Connecticut landscape professional, opposes the bill arguing that it mandates a transition to electric equipment without adequately considering real-world challenges. Barone highlights three main concerns: **Lack of stakeholder input:** Industry professionals were not properly consulted despite prior assurances. **Financial burden:** Electric equipment requires significant upfront investment (tools, batteries, charging infrastructure), and the bill provides no funding or incentives to offset these costs. **Operational limitations:** Current electric equipment may not reliably meet the performance, runtime, and durability needs of large-scale and demanding landscaping work. This is why Barone urges lawmakers to pause the bill and instead form a stakeholder working group to study costs, infrastructure, and feasibility, advocating for a gradual, collaborative transition rather than a mandated ban.

Alexis Blodgett and Kris Friedl, Co-owners, The Shrub Guys

Alexis Blodgett and Kris Friedl, are co-owners of a landscaping business in Windsor, Connecticut, and they oppose the proposed bill. Some of their reasons are: **Technology Limitations:** Current electric blowers cannot reliably replace commercial-grade gas equipment for a full workday without significant compromise. Businesses would need to invest heavily in batteries, chargers, and infrastructure, placing a substantial financial burden on small businesses. **Economic Impact:** The bill would increase costs for landscaping services, potentially leading to higher prices for homeowners, layoffs, business closures, and a shift toward larger corporations that can absorb the regulatory costs. **Environmental Concerns:** The bill overlooks the environmental impacts of lithium battery production, mining, and disposal. The increased electrical demand for charging infrastructure also raises concerns, especially as Connecticut still relies on non-renewable energy sources. **Regulation Issues:** A blanket ban removes operational flexibility and forces businesses to adopt technology before it's fully viable. This is why they advocate for market-driven innovation rather than forced mandates. Finally, instead of a ban, they suggest a phased transition based on technology maturity, incentive programs, and tax credits to support small businesses without destabilizing the industry. They urge the committee to reject the bill and pursue a more balanced, data-driven approach that aligns with both environmental and business concerns.

George Cargos, Owner, Cargos Landscaping

Owner of Cargos Landscaping describes three issues he has with the bill. One of them being that with the passing of this bill, it will lead to another tax on business owners, and the cost to

dispose of gas-powered equipment and the purchase new battery powered equipment. Second, the production, recycling and or disposal of batteries for battery powered equipment that may not be environmentally friendly than gas powered equipment. Third, battery powered equipment is not equal to gas powered equipment. He mentions that one day electric/battery powered equipment will become as powerful and be superior to gas-powered blowers but currently that is not the case in his opinion. He notes that he owns both an battery powered equipment and gas powered equipment and at the moment the gas powered equipment works better for him.

Kevin Collins, Director of Agronomy, Tradition Golf Club at Oak Lane

Director of Agronomy, Kevin Collins, states his opposition to SB 319. He mentions that there are very important tools necessary for leaf clean up during the fall season on golf courses and landscaping companies. The battery operated blowers are very expensive costing about \$4000-\$5000 which includes only one extra battery, which only leads to increasing costs. Additionally, he notes that the machines are not as powerful which is why it would take longer to complete tasks, which would increase labor costs. Overall, he believes that this bill is a costly mandate on many businesses across the state and urges that there be more conversation on the impact the bill would have on golf courses maintenance.

Jon Conte, Owner, JCs Landscaping LLC

Jon Conte, owner of a small Connecticut landscaping business, raises concerns about transitioning to battery-powered equipment. While he supports environmental progress, he argues that current electric technology is not yet practical or affordable for small businesses. His main concerns include: **High costs:** Switching to electric requires major upfront investments in tools, batteries, charging systems, and infrastructure, potentially costing tens of thousands of dollars and straining small business finances. **Performance limitations:** Battery equipment may have shorter runtimes, reduced power for heavy-duty work, downtime for charging, and decreased reliability—especially in demanding or commercial settings. **Weather challenges:** Cold temperatures in Connecticut further reduce battery performance, making electric equipment less dependable during key work seasons. He warns that mandates could lead to higher prices for customers, reduced hiring, or even business closures. Instead, he urges a more balanced approach, including a longer transition timeline, financial assistance, possible exemptions, and consideration of real-world operating conditions.

Michael Criss, First Selectman, Town of Harwinton

Michael R. Criss, First Selectman of Harwinton, opposes SB 319, arguing it is an inflexible state mandate that would negatively impact small businesses, municipalities, and rural communities. His main concerns include: **Financial burden:** Small landscaping businesses would face significant costs to replace gas equipment with electric alternatives, potentially leading to job losses and favoring larger corporations. **Municipal costs:** Towns would be forced to replace working equipment, increasing expenses and burdening taxpayers. **Infrastructure challenges:** Many areas lack the charging capacity and electrical infrastructure needed to support widespread electric equipment use. **One-size-fits-all policy:** The bill does not account for differences between urban and rural communities with varying needs and resources. **Loss of local control:** The legislation removes decision-making power from businesses and municipalities. He advocates for incentives and gradual, collaborative approaches instead of mandates, and urges lawmakers to reject the bill.

Thomas Fitting, President, Royal Oak Landscape

President of Royal Oak Landscape, Thomas Fitting opposes the bill since he believes that battery technology is not yet efficient for commercial applications. He notes that small chargeable batteries do not hold their charge for long, especially with the backpack blowers and other equipment he uses as a landscape contractor. He gives as an example that in the fall season, for fall leaf cleanups, they use the blowers for eight to ten hours every day and notes that gas powered backpack blowers can run for hours on one tank of fuel; whereas the batteries only last about three hours. This would cause a need for contractors to have to keep multiple batteries with them each day while on a job site. He questions, how would they charge the batteries while working out on a job site with no outlet near by. They would have to keep a generator on hand and therefore would still be using gas powered equipment. Fitting, argues that if companies like his were no longer able to use gas powered equipment, carrying multiple batteries every day would be a HUGE expense and burden for a small business to incur. As well as, having to change out these batteries during the day is time consuming and inefficient and would take valuable time away from their work.

Chris Goodwin, Officer, CT Nursery & Landscaping Association (CNLA)

Chris Goodwin, an officer with the Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association, supports electric outdoor power equipment but opposes S.B. 319 as currently written. He explains that while electric tools work well in many cases, electric leaf blowers are not yet practical for large properties or professional use due to short runtime, long recharge times, and high costs. Compared to gas-powered leaf blowers, electric versions require significant investment in batteries and equipment, making them financially unsustainable for many businesses. As a perspective he gives the following example: Makita power tools' largest battery is a 1500 Watt Hour, backpack mounted battery, which can be consider to be one of the best batteries for an electric leaf blower. If this battery is used to power a weed-Wacker, it can achieve 6 hours of runtime. If that same battery is used on a leaf blower, it can only achieve 40 minutes of runtime, before needing 6 hours to recharge. This leaf blower is also expensive. Whereas a gas leaf blower could run around \$500, this unit costs \$2800. Goodwin argues that instead of banning gas leaf blowers, the state should encourage voluntary adoption of electric alternatives through incentives and promotion. He believes this approach would reduce emissions while allowing contractors to choose the tools that best meet their needs.

Valerie, Stolfi Collins, Executive Director, CT Recreation and Parks Association (CRPA)

CRPA supports reducing emissions but opposes the bill at this time, arguing that electric equipment—especially leaf blowers—does not yet match the performance, efficiency, or practicality of gas-powered tools. They note that while some electric equipment (like mowers and chainsaws) is viable, many tools require more batteries, higher costs, and increased downtime, making them less effective for daily operations. CRPA also raises concerns about higher labor needs, increased long-term costs (electricity, battery replacement, staffing), and uncertain environmental benefits given reliance on fossil-fuel-based electricity. They argue the bill could create unfunded mandates for municipalities and stress that a comprehensive transition plan—addressing infrastructure, battery disposal, grid capacity, and performance standards—should be developed before implementing such requirements.

Terence Stovall, Manager, State & Local Government Affairs, National Association of Landscape Professionals

The National Association of Landscape Professionals supports reducing emissions but raises concerns about SB 319's timeline and structure, particularly the proposed ban on sales by 2029 and use by 2030. They argue the policy was developed without sufficient input from industry professionals and does not reflect real-world operational challenges. NALP highlights the high costs of transitioning to electric equipment—including tools, batteries, infrastructure, and facility upgrades—which would largely fall on small businesses and their customers without financial assistance. They also note that current electric equipment often lacks the power, runtime, and reliability needed for large or complex job sites. They recommend a more collaborative approach, such as forming a stakeholder group or conducting a formal study, to better assess feasibility, costs, and timelines before implementing such a policy.

Doug Horton, Senior Vice President, Regulatory Eversource Energy

Eversource Energy opposes a specific provision of SB 319 that would fund the transition to electric landscaping equipment by increasing charges on customers' electric bills. While the company supports the goal of moving from gas-powered to electric equipment, it objects to using the System Benefits Charge because it would raise costs for ratepayers without any cap. Eversource argues this approach is inconsistent with efforts to keep utility bills affordable and could unfairly burden all customers—including renters and lower-income households—while disproportionately benefiting more affluent residents. The company recommends that, if the program moves forward, it should be funded through other means (such as taxes or bonding) rather than through utility bills.

Daniel V. Jerram, First Selectman, Town of New Hartford

First Selectman of New Hartford, Daniel V. Jerram, argues that he opposes bill SB 319, due to the state already having some of the highest taxes and electric rates in the nation.

Cindy Johnson, Golf Course Superintendent, Tumble Brook Country Club

Johnson the Superintendent for Tumble Brook Country Club, states her opposition to the bill for the following reasons: stakeholder engagement, financial impact, and operational reality. He urges the committee to pursue a study or stakeholder working group to evaluate performance standards, infrastructure needs, costs impacts, and realistic timelines. A collaborative, market-driven transition will yield better environmental outcomes without destabilizing small businesses or limiting service capabilities.

Bruce Moore, President-CEO, Eastern Land Management

Bruce Moore President of Eastern Land Management, opposes the bill, arguing that while their company already uses battery-powered equipment, current technology and infrastructure are not advanced enough to support a full ban on gas-powered equipment within four years. He explains that commercial landscaping operations rely on tightly integrated systems, and switching to electric tools requires major, long-term investments in batteries, charging infrastructure, safety systems, and training. They emphasize that battery technology is still evolving, and mandating a rapid transition could force businesses to invest heavily in systems that may soon become outdated, creating financial strain and inefficiencies. Increased costs would likely be passed on to customers such as schools, hospitals, municipalities, and homeowners. Moore notes that more time is needed for electric equipment to reliably meet commercial demands and urges lawmakers to delay the bill and involve industry stakeholders in developing practical solutions.

Peter Myers, Senior Policy Director, CBIA

Pete Myers of the Connecticut Business & Industry Association opposes SB 319, arguing that it would increase electricity costs by expanding the Public Benefits Charge to fund electrification of landscaping equipment. He says this would burden businesses—especially small ones—by making them pay higher electric bills, even if they don't use the equipment. He also emphasizes that many landscaping companies already operate on thin margins and face rising costs, so the added expenses and restrictions could hurt their ability to compete. He concludes that electric equipment is not suitable for all situations, and the bill takes an overly broad, one-size-fits-all approach.

The following individuals and organizations also expressed opposition to the bill for similar reasons as the one's stated above.

Ryan Restivo, Parks Superintendent, Town of New Canaan

Chris Koenig, Branch Manager, Eastern Land Management

Richard Kremer, Golf Course Superintendent, Pequabuck Golf Club

Wayne Lagasse, Golf Course Superintendent, Stonington Country Club

Marcie Miner, Managing Member, Naturescape LLC

Dave Wollman, Owner, Atlantic Lawn Service

Jon Yong, Owner, Yin Yang Professional Services

Sean Hansen, Manager, Robert Hansen Landscaping

Andy Hodes, Executive Director, Jewish Cemetery Association

Don Forbes, Owner, Forbes Asphalt Maintenance

Michael Frawley, Owner, Greater New Haven Landscaping

David Burr, President, D.W. Burr Landscape

Aaron Ansaldi, President, The Andrew Ansaldi Co

David Golembeski, Government Relations Chair, CT Association of Golf Course Superintendents (CAGCS)

Over 130 citizens express opposition to the bill.

Reported by: Luna Romani

Date: 03/25/2026