

The following letter to the committee concerns agenda item 2.12 which is scheduled for discussion on May 22, 2024.

I consent to this message being placed on the public record.

Members of the Civic Works Committee

I was very pleased to see that city staff has delivered a report concerning use of gas-powered lawn care equipment to the Civic Works Committee. The negative environmental and health impacts of gas-powered lawn care equipment are well-documented online and in research literature (see references below) and include heightened cancer risk, heart and lung disease, hearing loss, psychological distress, loss of biodiversity, and accelerated climate change. Phasing out gas-powered lawn care equipment is therefore long overdue in the City of London and I hope the delivery of this report represents an important step toward achieving this long-term goal.

To best achieve this goal, however, the report needs to be strengthened in two ways.

First, after noting that noise, air contaminant, and hazardous air pollutant emissions are very likely a sufficient basis for regulating gas-powered lawncare equipment, the report backs away and settles on awareness campaigns as the next step. This is unacceptable. Londoners do not need to be told that gas-powered lawn care equipment generates noise and pollution. Trust me, we are very aware of that. We need the city to act now either by making better use of existing by-laws (e.g., London's noise by-laws) or by introducing new regulatory mechanisms.

Second, the report fails to recognize and involve community organizations that have long petitioned municipal governments to phase out gas-powered lawn care and instead advocates partnering with Landscape Ontario, a billion-dollar organization that lobbies on behalf of landscaping companies. London itself has numerous environmental organizations that would welcome the opportunity to be involved in these discussions including Climate Action London and Quiet Communities. See also Gasbusters (<https://www.gasbusters.ca/>), which is based in Toronto. Involve the grassroots community organizations, not just corporate lobbyists.

I strongly encourage the Civic Works Committee to strengthen this report and work toward phasing out gas-powered lawn care in our city.

Sincerely

J Bruce Morton



London

References

Health and environmental impact of gas-powered leaf blowers

<https://kleinmanenergy.upenn.edu/news-insights/think-globally-on-climate-act-locally-on-leaf-blowers/>

<https://sciforschenonline.org/journals/environmental-toxicological-studies/JETS-1-106.php>

<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/health-and-environmental-impacts-leaf-blowers>

<https://mountsinaiexposomics.org/gas-leaf-blowers-are-health-hazards/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2023/11/05/leaf-blowers-fall-environment-health/>

<https://resphealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Gas-Powered-Leaf-Blowers-Leave-Lungs-Vulnerable.pdf>

<https://forestry.com/editorial/the-environmental-and-health-impact-of-leaf-blowers-a-call-for-change/#:~:text=The%20pollutants%20emitted%20by%20gas,hearing%20loss%2C%20and%20cardiovascular%20risks.>

Air pollution and human health

<https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.2008940117>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0161813X22001668?via%3Dihub>

Resources

<https://www.quietcleanpdx.org/resources-leaf-blowers-information/>