

August 25, 2020

**TO: Supervisor Peter Van Scovoc
East Hampton Town, New York**

**Copy: Deputy Supervisor Sylvia Overby
Councilman Jeffrey L. Bragman
Councilwoman Kathee Burke-Gonzalez
Councilman David Lys**

From: [Larry Will](#)



Reference:

<https://www.27east.com/east-hampton-press/east-hampton-town-will-look-at-new-leaf-blower-restrictions-1719037/>

I see from the referenced Internet article that your town is considering restrictions on leaf blowers similar to that of neighboring cities. If I may, I would like to provide insight that will help you make a decision as to what type of restriction will be best for all concerned.

I am a former Vice President of Engineering for Echo Inc., a leading manufacturer of powered handheld lawn care products. I am not a stakeholder in your community's leaf blower issue, nor am I trying to interfere with any decision you deem necessary. But I am a source of facts about the design and use of cordless and gasoline powered leaf blowers.

From the referenced article, I can see that whatever is decided, it will be the result of consensus between local professional lawn care providers, and the residents of East Hampton Town. I have contacted over 180 cities and I want to say that your approach to this issue is highly commendable. I like everything you are presently considering, but there are few details you should have that may shed some light on the proposal.

Battery-powered leaf blowers are becoming very popular among homeowners. My wife loves ours because it is easy for her to use, not that I make her clean the yard with it, but because she likes to keep our flower adorned deck free of debris, which seems like an everyday ritual. I use it in the summer to clean a 5400 square foot driveway and courtyard. It does an adequate job clearing debris from paved surfaces. It is faster than a broom or rake and does a much better job.

However, battery powered blowers have lower performance than that of a gasoline powered unit, because of their limited available propulsion energy from a battery. This means it takes more time to get the job done. But most homeowners do not mind having to spend a little extra time working in their yard, as long as it doesn't take too much time. To many, their yard is a source of pride and pleasure, requiring a great deal of care, with a personal touch.

To others, yardwork is a pain. It is just a yard with grass that never quits growing, and trees that continually shed leaves, seed pods and twigs, always in need of grooming. These people turn to the yard care professional for this task. From the above article, it appears that Mr. Paul Munoz' customers have yards that do not require larger leaf blowers for timely debris removal, but to many other landscapers, the battery powered blower is inadequate. To make money, they must get the job done fast. This can only be done with a gasoline powered blower.

The underlying issue with the leaf blower is noise. The industry learned of this more than 20 years ago and deliberately addressed this issue in response to complaints. Much has been done to reduce the noise from gasoline powered leaf blowers. In order to understand how sound reduction is quantified, note that for every six dB(A) reduction in sound magnitude (from any starting point on the measurement scale), the actual volume is reduced by 50%.

This much sound reduction is hard to accept as being true for the average person because we cannot comprehend from experience what a 50% reduction sounds like. The best thing to do is to witness an actual leaf blower sound comparison, but I know that it is not easy to arrange this. An alternative is to check out the [video](#) of an actual demonstration developed for the comparison of

leaf blowers on my website. You might be surprised to learn that battery powered leaf blowers are not as quiet as you may have been led to believe.

In the case of a gasoline powered leaf blower, sound level is measured at 50 feet per the industry Standard ([ANSI B175.2](#)). A “Quiet” leaf blower is 65 dB(A) or less, measured per the above Standard. This is at least a seventy-five percent reduction in sound or 12 dB(A), from a typical noisy leaf blower at 77 dB(A)..

Quiet leaf blowers have been available for a long time, however, not all leaf blowers are quiet. Therefore, I encourage you to learn more about these quiet blowers before summarily banning them along with the noisy ones.

Fortunately, because of the industry’s foresight, any city that wants to limit the sound emanating from a gas-powered leaf blower can easily determine sound magnitude in the field without testing. The consumer can also determine compliance with local sound limitations at the point of purchase via the attached [label](#). This decal has been on all gasoline powered leaf blowers manufactured in the United States for at least the past fifteen years.

Just by way of a caution, in some cities, banning gasoline-powered leaf blowers has been controversial. Lawn care contractors have taken at least one city to [court](#) over a ban. The reason is because it significantly impacts their livelihood. It appears that many of the residents of East Hampton have impressive homes with larger yards. Lawn care contractors must be a common sight in your community.

One other potential obstacle could be enforcement. Police officers, in most cases, are reluctant to cite their neighbors with leaf blower violations. Not when their primary job is to apprehend criminals, prevent acts of violence and ardently protect citizens and their property. Lots of cities have problems with enforcement; Palo Alto, Santa Monica, and Los Angeles just to mention a few.

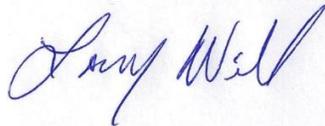
As may be now be obvious to you, my experience guides me to say that the electric or battery powered leaf blowers should be allowed all year round for the homeowner to use. And the professional user should be allowed to use the gasoline powered unit, even during the summer months, if it meets quiet leaf blower standards.

As you get into the study regarding leaf blowers, you will likely hear other arguments pointing to reasons why gas-powered blowers should be banned. Most, if not all of these arguments, are wholly unsubstantiated. Be wary of comments and quotations based on someone’s opinion and derogatory innuendo. The more colorful the argument and the more often it is repeated, however untrue it

may be, the more believable it becomes. But the facts do not support these claims. As these arguments are brought up, you can find help in understanding the facts at my [website](#).

If you should need information that is not clearly addressed here or on my website, please contact me and I will do whatever I can to help, at no cost to you, including further research on your behalf.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Larry Will". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

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