

March 2, 2021

**TO: County Executive Marc Elrich
Montgomery County Maryland**

**Copy: Council President Tom Hucker
Council Vice President Gabe Albornoz
Councilmembers:
Andrew Friedson, Even Glass, Will Jawando, Sidney
Katz, Nancy Navarro, Craig Rice, Hans Riemer**

From: [Larry Will](#) ¹



References: <https://www.mymcmedia.org/petition-calls-for-banning-of-gas-leaf-blowers-in-urban-montgomery-county/>

and

https://www.change.org/p/marc-elrich-banning-gas-leaf-blowers-in-montgomery-county?signed=true&use_react=false

Dear County Executive Elrich:

I see from the referenced documents on the Web that the gasoline-powered leaf blower is at issue in Montgomery County. It's clear that Quentin Gaudry of Bethesda wants to ban them, but is this the right thing to do? Apparently, the Executive office is preparing a proposal concerning the limitation of these blowers to present before the council in the near future. I find that in many cases, these proposals are based solely on the claims made by anti-leaf blower

advocates. The problem with that is most of what you will hear is negative. Furthermore, supporting documentation, if any has been given to you, is just plain incorrect or at the very least, grossly overstated. Those making these statements about environmental impact do not have the firsthand knowledge or background to be able to tell when their quote to you, taken from a biased source, is actually true. Just about everything you hear is based on opinion, either their own or that of someone else's.

Who am I to tell you all this? I am a former Vice President of Engineering for Echo Inc., a leading manufacturer of powered handheld lawn care products. I have been in the lawncare industry for 27 years, 19 of these years as an advisor to cities with leaf blower issues. I do not live or work in your community, but what I share with you in this document will not be heard from anyone else in your area. I am not a stakeholder in your leaf blower issue, and I am not trying to interfere with any decision you deem necessary. I just want you to know the truth about leaf blowers. More importantly, I am not trying to sell anything. My employer makes both battery and gasoline-powered leaf blowers, so I have nothing to gain or lose, regardless of your decision. I submit this information as a public service to you, to your county and to the people that own and use leaf blowers in Montgomery County. That includes the residents that own them and the contractors that depend on them to make a living. If you are still uncomfortable with trusting me, someone from outside your community, click [here](#)¹ if you want to see my qualifications and credentials.

The driving force behind this issue is a petition to ban leaf blowers submitted by Quentin Gaudry, which contains 3300 signatures. That sure sounds like a lot of people, especially if it were people from a community of 10,000 people, but Montgomery County, according to the internet, [contains 1 million residents](#). That 3300 is 0.003% of the population. Is that sufficient to warrant creating a ban that impacts 99+% of your population? If you really want to know what your constituents want, put it on a referendum to the voters.

Concerning this call for signatures, have you looked at the picture on this webpage? How is that the fault of the leaf blower. That operator should be cited as a public nuisance.



Regardless, it should be of concern to you that what you mostly hear from anti-leaf blower advocates is negative. If I were in your position, I would like to know the other side of the issue and whether what you are being told is factual or not.

Here are some very important facts to consider, as they relate to gasoline powered leaf blowers:

- The only true issue is that some of them are noisy. But quiet ones at 65 dB(A), measured at 50 feet, are universally available from several manufacturers. These blowers are [actually quieter](#) than battery-powered units.
- Quiet leaf blowers are only 85 dB(A) at the ear of the operator. Hearing protection is not required according to OSHA.
- Battery-powered leaf blowers are less powerful and must be used longer to get the job done.
- As you can see from the above picture, the operator is more at fault for the blower controversy than is the leaf blower, using it inappropriately and for extended periods of time. Education is the solution to this problem.
- Health hazard and environmental impact issues are overstated if not untrue. The carbon footprint is miniscule and hydrocarbon exhaust emission has been reduced by 85 to 90%. Don't believe what you read on "mymcmedia".

If you want to see proof of what I say above, and are interested in being educated about the leaf blower, this document, it's [appendix](#) and my [website](#) are where you will find the other side of the story.

You may be thinking that because there are cities that have banned leaf blowers, you can't go too far wrong to follow their precedent. One should look into the result of creating such a ban. Will homeowners with leaf blowers be upset? Will current users comply with your ordinance? How will it be enforced? How does this impact the elderly? What will be the cost impact to the homeowner and landscape contractor? Will people use time consuming tools, or will they just leave the debris where it lies? Are battery powered leaf blowers truly a

replacement for a gasoline version, performance wise? You should know that some cities have been taken to [court](#)²⁴ over this type of ordinance.

You can talk to council members from cities that already have a ban, but these are the people that wanted the ban in the first place, and you know what they will say. You need to talk to the enforcers, local lawn care contractors, and homeowners to learn the true impact. You know, many enforcement officers are reluctant to issue a citation to their neighbor, just to please someone that is a little bothered by the noise. How much government control should there really be? Is using a leaf blower really that bad for the environment, after all that has been done to improve them?

You may not know this, but there are groups of people, from outside your community, working hard to have gasoline-powered leaf blowers banned throughout the country. Because many cities consider noise a weak reason for banning blowers, these organized and well financed ban advocates look for other reasons. The concept of citing health hazards as a reason for a ban was initiated by Peter and Susan Kendall of Orinda, California. You can read all about them in the [New Yorker, October 25, 2010 issue](#)⁴. Ms. Kendall said, "I would (in the future) try to get the law classified not under noise but under health and safety..."

So, the Kendall's and many others have searched the Internet for statements and enlisted dignitaries that would support their mission, regardless of the truth. I am sure you know from your experience with the media that if something is said often enough, by many different people, or put in print by many sources, regardless of the facts, people will tend to believe it as being true. Others will then proceed to confidently restate these unproven hypotheses emphatically. I think this is called "[spinning](#)"³.

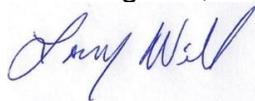
The local people on the other hand, that are trying to convince you to ban leaf blowers, are well meaning, conscientious, and dedicated to improving the environment. But they are not professionals. What I mean by not being professional is that none of them are in any way professionally involved in the use, development, or accreditation of gasoline-powered yard care products. I venture to say that they themselves have likely never even used these products personally and therefore have no concept of how valuable they are to homeowners and professional users, let alone their environmental impact so blatantly expressed.

Am I biased? Sure. But my bias is to present the facts, based on my personal experience in the industry as an engineer designing these products. I have worked personally and directly with organizations such as the California Air

Resources Board (CARB), the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Underwriters Laboratories (UL), and the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), to arrive at environmentally friendly products. Do I want to preserve the gasoline-powered leaf blower? Yes! But only because I see that banning it is unnecessary since noise is the issue and quiet gasoline powered leaf blowers are available from several manufacturers. There is a [label](#)²³ on the unit that tells you what the sound level is, making it easy to enforce your noise restriction, should you choose. Again, there is no need to ban gasoline-powered leaf blowers. In time, when battery-powered units have sufficient power and performance, they will replace gasoline power by their own merits.

Please, read the attached appendix, with links to references, to learn more facts about the leaf blower and its use.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Larry Will". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name.

Larry Will. BSME, Leaf Blower Information Specialist, ECHO Inc.
Vice President Engineering (retired)
Phone: 479-256-0282,
Email: info@leafblownoise.com
Website: <https://www.leafblownoise.com/>

Click: [APPENDIX](#) for details.