

November 1, 2021

**TO: Mayor Justin Elicker  
New Haven, Connecticut**

**Council President Tyisha Walker-Myers  
Director Albert Lucas  
and  
All Municipal Council Members**

**From: [Larry Will](#)**



References:

[https://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/gas\\_powered\\_leaf\\_blower/](https://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/gas_powered_leaf_blower/)

Dear Mayor Elicker and Distinguished Council Members:

Please do not let the length of this letter deter you from reading it, because it will turn out to be of great value and interest to you for it concerns the leaf blower. At the very least, it will give you a new prospective on the issues. You would do well to read it on your computer because I have provided several links that will elaborate on or justify claims I make.

According to the referenced Internet article, a very strong proposal to limit the use of gasoline powered leaf blowers is being made by the Environmental Advisory Council. From the referenced article, I can see that there is going to be considerable debate on the subject in the coming weeks. My concern is that up until now, all you have heard is why they should be banned. But you should be

asking yourself, if they are as bad for the environment as these people are telling you, why in the world hasn't the EPA already banned them? It's because, for the most part, what they are saying is not true.

Right up front, I want to say that 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 information about the design and use of cordless and gasoline-powered leaf blowers that will be enlightening to you. Why? Because I designed them, tested them, worked with regulatory agencies to certify them, and have spent more than 27 years helping cities like New Haven learn the truth about them. I have contacted over [190 cities](#) in this endeavor.

I am a retired Vice President of Engineering for Echo Inc., a leading manufacturer of powered handheld lawn care products. I would like to start by providing you with a link to a brief summary of my [qualifications and credentials](#).

All the usual points presented as reasons for banning leaf blowers are very familiar to me. I have studied each of them in detail and except for sound, I find them to be either false, misleading, outdated, or unsubstantiated.

I know the leaf blower has been a hot button for some people for a long time, especially in your area of the country. But most of the cities that have decided to ban leaf blowers, have done so because of two things; highly publicized false information and activist pressure.

If the proposal in New Haven is prepared primarily on the negative claims made about the gasoline-powered leaf blower, in other words, what you have heard so far, you are being misled. I know you want to do something about the leaf blower to please those that want them controlled, but you must consider the impact this will have on those that use and need them.

As for advocate pressure, one should be sure, that this group represents the will of most of your constituents. Your form of representative government is probably the best way to gauge the will of the community, with 30 active Municipal Council Members.

Why is there so much propaganda against the leaf blower? Why are there so many negative websites on the Internet? Money! There is a lot of money being spent, spreading the story they want you to hear. The defenders of the leaf blower have no money. They are small landscape companies that work on a shoestring. They don't have the financial backing necessary to check the veracity of the claims against the leaf blower to effectively fight back. Besides that, what are they going to say? "We can't do our job without the gasoline-

powered leaf blower. There are no workable alternatives to this device.” Leslie Radcliffe is right. Most professionals are disinclined to fight back because they don’t have time nor the ability to find the technical facts about these devices. There are many so called non-profit organizations dedicated to banning the leaf blower, at least one of them with [15 employees](#) working on nothing else but replacing these and other lawn care products with battery power.

According to the referenced article, a claim is made that leaf blowers are hazardous to the environment and your health. Apparently, there has been a letter submitted from three “Medicine doctors and faculty” from Yale University supporting the phase out of gas-powered leaf blowers. Very impressive! We trust they are trained in their profession, but what do they really know about leaf blowers, other than what anyone can read on the Internet.

Let me address how you are being misled. I do not want to excoriate the Advisory Council members that are proposing the leaf blower ordinance. That is not my purpose, for I know they are convinced they are standing on firm ground. I agree that it is appropriate to do something about leaf blowers, because they can be irritating, and they agitate the people that are annoyed by them. But they are annoyed by the noise, not the other things being attributed to leaf blowers, things that have no basis in fact.

The initial reason for attacking leaf blowers always was, and still is for that matter, that some of them are noisy and therefore irritating. I will talk more about noise later in this letter, but you should know that the concept of citing health hazards as the reason for doing something, is contrived. It was initiated by Peter and Susan Kendall of Orinda, California. You can read all about them in the [New Yorker, October 25, 2010 issue](#). They wanted leaf blowers banned. Because sound was not a compelling enough reason for banning leaf blowers in their hometown, 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 others, no doubt including some advocates in New Haven, have searched the Internet for the names of dignitaries and organizations that provide statements supporting their mission, regardless of the truth. Local people that are strongly against the leaf blower are eager to believe what they read, using these falsehoods to justify their cause. Some of the statements you hear even defy logic. 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. They then will proceed to confidently restate these unproven hypotheses emphatically.

Here are the facts in detail, which via the indicated links will explain how you are being misled:

**Greenhouse gas (carbon dioxide):**

*Excerpt from Professor Ian Plimer's book in a brief summary: [PLIMER](#) :  
"Of course, you know about this evil carbon dioxide that we are trying to suppress - it's that vital chemical compound that every plant requires to live and grow and to synthesize into oxygen for us humans and all animal life."*

*"Okay, here's the bombshell. The (recent) volcanic eruption in Iceland. Since its first spewing of volcanic ash, it has, in just FOUR DAYS, NEGATED EVERY SINGLE EFFORT you have made in the past five years to control CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on our planet - all of you.*

<https://eos.org/research-spotlights/volcano-in-iceland-is-one-of-the-largest-sources-of-volcanic-co2>

<https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/148510/fagradalsfjall-continues-to-erupt>

[https://www.leafblownoise.com/#Consider\\_greenhouse\\_gasses](https://www.leafblownoise.com/#Consider_greenhouse_gasses)

To say that leaf blowers are a serious source of greenhouse gas is an uninformed statement. Ten ounces of fuel through a leaf blower (10 minutes running time per week for a typical household) generates about the same amount of CO<sub>2</sub> as that found in a [couple cases of beer](#).

**Hydrocarbon exhaust emission:**

It is illegal for a city or town such as New Haven to ban leaf blowers because of this type of exhaust emission.

[https://www.leafblownoise.com/#Can\\_Leaf\\_Blowers\\_be\\_regulated\\_locally\\_to\\_reduce\\_emissions](https://www.leafblownoise.com/#Can_Leaf_Blowers_be_regulated_locally_to_reduce_emissions)

Don't believe the diatribe you hear about leaf blower exhaust emission being worse than a Ford Raptor pickup truck, or any other over the road vehicle for that matter. Keep in mind the difference in engine size, [400 horsepower](#) vs. 2.4 horsepower.

<https://www.leafblownoise.com/edmonds%20test%20response2.pdf>

Since January 2005, this type of exhaust emission has been vastly reduced on leaf blowers, meeting imposed government limits.

[https://www.leafblownoise.com/#What then is the big complaint](https://www.leafblownoise.com/#What%20then%20is%20the%20big%20complaint)

**Dust:**

Only PM10 and PM2.5 particulate matter is hazardous to your health, and leaf blowers are not the source of that constituent in the atmosphere.

[https://www.leafblownoise.com/#Are leaf blowers hazardous to your health](https://www.leafblownoise.com/#Are%20leaf%20blowers%20hazardous%20to%20your%20health)

Take a look at what the source of this airborne particulate matter really is.

<https://www.leafblownoise.com/Table%203%2011%20San%20Joaquin%20Valley%20PM10.doc>

Okay, now what about **noise**? Well, the industry took notice of blower noise more than 25 years ago and deliberately addressed this issue in response to complaints. Much has been done to reduce the noise from all gasoline powered leaf blowers, spending millions of dollars to make an alternative to noisy blowers available to the consumer.

In the case of a gasoline-powered leaf blower, sound level is measured at 50 feet to replicate what a bystander will experience. The published values are obtained per the industry Standard ([ANSI B175.2](#)). A “Quiet” leaf blower is 65 dB(A) or less, measured per this Standard.

Now just think about what that equates to for a minute. Sixty-five dB(A) is the same sound level as that inside a [typical office environment](#). Is it silent? No! But this is at least a seventy-five percent reduction in sound. At the ear of the operator, quiet leaf blowers are only 85 dB(A) and do not require hearing protection [according to OSHA](#). Check out the [video](#) of an actual demonstration developed for the comparison of leaf blower sound on my website. Note that battery-powered blowers are not as quiet as one might think. To understand how sound level is quantified, [click here](#).

Your residential noise standard of 55 dB(A) is [wildly unreasonable](#). This has got to be in reference to background sound, not temporary or limited duration

sounds. Otherwise, you would have to ban all automobiles, lawnmowers, motorcycles and many air conditioners. My printer, three feet away, is 50 dB(A).

Taken from the [WHO website](#), page 61: *“To protect the majority of people from being seriously annoyed during the daytime, the sound pressure level on balconies, terraces and outdoor living areas should not exceed 55 dB(A) for a steady, continuous noise.”*

Quiet leaf blowers have been available for a long time, however, not all leaf blowers are quiet. Now for a little technical talk. Look at it this way. Sound from today’s leaf blowers can be categorized per the following:

- Sound levels from Quiet blowers 65 dB(A) or less, have been reduced by 75%.
- Blowers 71 dB(A) or less, have been reduced by at least 50%.
- Blowers at 77 dB(A) are loud.
- Blowers greater than 77 dB(A) should be considered too loud for residential use.

From this, you can see that for every 6 dB(A) reduction in sound level, the volume is reduced by 50%.

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 quiet gasoline powered leaf blowers manufactured in the United States for at least the past fifteen years. If there is no label on a unit, you can assume it is loud and it does not comply.

If you are thinking that you should require battery-powered or electric units as a replacement, there is no need. If you walk through your local home supply center, it is obvious that battery power is already very popular with the homeowner. Given time for the technology to develop, the professional will also accept the design as a replacement on its own merit. In spite of what you may have heard, the available battery power today is not sufficient for the professional application, resulting in loss of time, increased cost and the potential loss of business or profit.

In the back of your mind, you may be thinking that because there are other cities that have banned blowers, you can't go too far wrong to follow their precedent. If you are seriously considering this, you should have questions:

- How will a ban be enforced?
- Will homeowners with leaf blowers be upset or angry?
- How does this impact the elderly, or those unable to use manual means?
- What will be the cost impact to the homeowner and landscape contractor?
- Are you at least willing to partially share in the cost for consumers and professionals to convert to battery power? A rebate so to speak. For one unit, it could cost a professional as much as \$2000, including enough batteries to run the unit for a four-to-six-hour period of any given day.
- Will current users comply with your ordinance or just take a chance?
- Will people use time consuming tools, or will they leave the debris?
- Has this done anything to lessen the appearance of their city?

If you decide to check this out for yourself, you can talk to council members from the cities that already have a ban, but don't overlook talking to the enforcers, local lawn care providers, and homeowners to learn the true impact.

Best Regards,



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Click: [APPENDIX](#) for details and [links](#) to references.