

August 30, 2016

Jamie Banks, PhD, MS
Executive Director
Quiet Communities
PO Box 533
Lincoln, MA 01773

Dear Ms. Banks:

Mr. Tim Dorsey, President ECHO Inc. has referred your letter of July 22, 2016 to me for a response. In the event you have not read my resume on the Internet, I was Vice President of Engineering at Echo Inc., Lake Zurich, IL from 1994 until my retirement in 2002. In this capacity, I oversaw the development of the first "Quiet" leaf blower that reduced leaf blower sound by 75%.

For more than 14 years following my retirement, I have been addressing leaf blower concerns throughout the United States and Canada as an often unsolicited consultant to more than [155 city and state legislative bodies](#). I share my expertise and experience wherever consideration is being given to the regulation of gasoline powered leaf blowers. My intent is to provide reliable information about products presently being manufactured so an informed decision can be made.

As a leaf blower expert in design, manufacture, application and use, I am in a unique position to supply up-to-date and accurate data and facts. I know about exhaust emission regulations and other compliance requirements as well as the results from any and all pertinent studies that apply to leaf blowers.

Proof of my being an industry expert and spokesperson on the leaf blower can be found in the fact that I was asked by Dr. Eric Wood to give testimony at a National Academy of Engineering workshop in Washington DC on October 7, 2015 regarding the state of leaf blower technology as it relates to sound. I was also the one and only individual interviewed on camera for a leaf blower episode aired on CBS News Sunday Morning in rebuttal to the claims made by anti leaf blower advocates such as you.

I seem to recall that someone from your organization called me a few weeks ago and at that time I stated that I was a consultant for ECHO Inc. and as such worked on their behalf as I provided information about leaf blower use to cities faced with this issue. In this function, however, everything I say impacts the entire industry. Furthermore, ECHO Inc. is a member of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) and again, as ECHO's representative and on behalf of the industry, I was a prime contributor in authoring the leaf blower pamphlet presently available on the Internet <http://leafblownoise.com/LeafBlowerTraining.pdf>. I was also a contributor in the development of the ANSI Standard governing the way leaf blower sound is to be tested, reported and labeled, again on behalf of the industry <http://webstore.ansi.org/FindStandards.aspx>. Finally, under separate contract with OPEI, I was hired to provide detailed information in a form suitable for Internet publication about cities that have addressed leaf blower noise. If you have any doubt that I indirectly speak on behalf of the industry, you have my permission to contact Greg Knott at OPEI to verify my work with the industry and that they are well aware of my contribution. If you choose to involve other

members of OPEI, be aware that they will only give you and the city of Huntington the same basic information I have already reported.

I asked myself, what are your credentials as they apply to this subject? Where have you obtained your knowledge on the issue? Of all the lawn care products, what makes you single out leaf blowers as being hazardous to your health? Where are your facts coming from and are they based on documented data? Are those you are quoting as well informed regarding leaf blowers as I am and where did they get their information? Simply stating that something is so, does not make it so and quoting another person's opinion or anecdote does not make it a fact.

So I went to your website and followed the links to your resources to find that they are very general in nature. There is nothing that specifically addresses leaf blower pollution or leaf blower health hazards directly. When referring to noise, it speaks of all sorts of sources. As for the video on the Huntington website, the information given applies primarily to the entire yard care industry of which the leaf blower is only a small part of that industry. Further it makes no distinction between exhaust emission from old blowers built prior to January 2005 and newer blowers that meet present day restrictive emission regulations. Your personal preference on the issue is not justification enough to influence through regulation the livelihood of a profession and the personal preference of homeowners, especially when no environmental laws have been broken. When the banning of leaf blowers is placed to a referendum vote as it was in Arlington, MA, it is typically overturned <http://leafblownoise.com/Arlington%20vote.pdf>.
<http://leafblownoise.com/RevisedProposedVote.pdf>

As for my knowledge of electric leaf blowers, there is little you can teach me for I designed the very first commercial quality cordless leaf blower back in 2000. It had performance equal to small gasoline powered blowers. It had a computer controlled battery for variable speed control and battery protection designed by Energizer Power Systems, Gainesville FL. The batteries were not lithium ion. After extensive testing of this and other competitive blowers (corded and gasoline powered), we found that its sound level was 55 dB(A) measured according to the industry standard, which was far lower than any other leaf blower on the market. I introduced and demonstrated the prototype before the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to great reviews. Regardless of its acceptance, it was not placed into production due to its poor financial viability. Subsequent to this development program, ECHO is now in the marketplace with cordless leaf blowers available through Home Depot <http://www.homedepot.com/p/ECHO-120-mph-450-CFM-58-Volt-Lithium-Ion-Brushless-Cordless-Leaf-Blower-CBL-58V2AH/205566046>.

To answer more directly your complaints:

- **Mr. Will asserts that the PSA is no more than an "extension of a sales pitch for electric leaf blowers."**
 - I made no comment regarding Quiet Communities. Speaking to Councilwoman Susan A. Berland, I said only that *"Your video referenced above is an extension of a sales pitch for electric leaf blowers."*
 - I think you must admit that although Quiet Communities has a different agenda than a manufacturer of electric blowers might have toward promoting sales and you may

not directly profit from increased sales of this type blower, you surly are aggressively and exclusively promoting their use. Further, the organizations you are affiliated with are lined up precisely with your agenda and stand to gain substantially from your efforts <https://www.quietcommunities.org/making-a-difference/organizations/>.

- **Mr. Will asserts that the issue of noise remains the only real drawback to using the GLB. Air pollution from GLBs is "insignificant."**
 - The only real issue is noise, or it better be for if Huntington bans gasoline powered leaf blowers for the sake of exhaust emission, it is in direct violation of Section 209 of the Federal Clean Air Act, 1990.
<http://leafblownoise.com/Taken%20from%20the%20Federal%20Clean%20Air%20Act.pdf> *"No State or any political subdivision thereof shall adopt or attempt to enforce any standard relating to the control of emissions ..."*
 - Yes leaf blowers do produce emission constituents; same as cars, trucks, lawn mowers and all kinds of things, put not all exhaust emission is pollution. The EPA has determined after years of research and the gathering of data from the industry that the present level of exhaust emission from GLBs is acceptable and therefore insignificant.

- **Mr. Will asserts that buying quieter GLBs is the solution.**
 - It is the solution and this is exactly why I propose writing a regulation that mandates the use of only quiet leaf blowers, forcing noisy units already in the field to be retired while preventing the purchase of new blowers for use in Huntington that do not meet a low sound level such as the recommended 65 dB(A).

- **Mr. Will asserts that various misleading statements about electric blowers (e.g., not as quiet as you might think; don't have enough power for professional use; slow on the job).**
 - I realize that not all electric leaf blowers are noisy, but many if not most are, especially those with higher performance. If you actually compared electric (corded and cordless) blowers against a quiet gasoline powered blower via an outdoor demonstration, you would quickly recognize that the latter is quieter. There are low noise blowers with significantly higher performance than any corded or cordless electric blower, which will get the job done much faster. Most contractors prefer a higher performance level than that attainable from electric blowers <http://www.echo-usa.com/Pro/Products/Blowers/PB-760LN> .

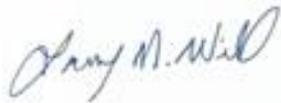
- **Mr. Will asserts that the lithium ion batteries used in electric leaf blowers are vulnerable to catching fire.**
 - It may be so that there have not been many cordless leaf blowers experiencing battery fires, but you yourself admit that there are instances where Li batteries have caught fire on Hoverboards. It also happens on laptop computers, cell phones, and even on airplanes, which are not cheap batteries
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_787_Dreamliner_battery_problems. One can deduce that there is a chance that it will happen on leaf blowers when the blower population in the field is greater.

I do not argue against your cause, nor do I disparage your organization for it is intended to be for the betterment of the environment, but if you dispute my stated purpose, which is to suggest that cities take advantage of a viable alternative to banning all gasoline powered leaf blowers, you need only speak with Diane Wolfberg, one of your advisor's. I worked with her back in 1999/2000 when she dealt with this leaf blower issue in Los Angeles. She knows I am not the enemy. She can also tell you first hand that a complete ban of GLBs does not work. She knows I have personally supported eradicating the leaf blower noise problem, but clearly you and I have chosen different paths to that end. I would prefer that you accept the fact that we simply are on opposite sides of the banning issue and not pursue this matter any further.

I shall not be retracting any of the statements I made to the city of Huntington for everything of a factual nature is supported by documentation. Opinions I may have shared, as you well know, require no justification and a retraction is not warranted. However, you have the right to dispute any opinions I may have voiced in my letter, as do I regarding your opinions.

In as much as you have copied Jo-Ann Raia, Town Clerk, Huntington, NY on your letter to Mr. Tim Dorsey, my response likewise has been copied to Ms. Raia. Any further correspondence requiring justification of statements made in this letter or my letter to Huntington dated May 23, 2016 or any other future correspondence between us shall likewise be shared with Ms. Raia and the Huntington Town Board.

Sincerely,



Larry Will, PE, Vice President (retired)
Leaf Blower Information Specialist
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479-256-0282

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For information about Echo Inc., click: <http://www.echo-usa.com/About-ECHO/About-Us>

Cc: Jo-Ann Raia, Town Clerk, Huntington, NY