

March 30, 2021

**TO: Mayor Sam Liccardo  
San Jose, California**

**Copy: Vice Mayor Charles Jones  
Council Members:**

**Sergio Jimenez  
David Cohen  
Devora Davis  
Sylvia Arenas  
Matt Mahan**

**Raul Peralez  
Magdalena Carrasco  
Maya Esparza  
Pam Foley**

**From: [Larry Will](#) <sup>1</sup>**



Reference: <https://sanjosespotlight.com/san-jose-lawmaker-looks-to-turn-complaints-about-gas-leaf-blowers-into-policy/>

Dear Mayor Liccardo:

I see from the referenced document on the Web that the gasoline-powered leaf blower is once again an issue for some residents in San Jose. Perhaps the center and leader of this movement to ban them is Mr. Marty Stuczynski. I can understand his position on this matter, for he is not alone in his conviction. I have seen this in several cities in California. Some leaf blowers are loud and can be very irritating if they are use often, near your residence, and for long periods of time.

I commend Council Member Mahan's initiative to bring residents into the decision-making process via various working groups, especially as it applies to the leaf blower issue. It is important that the Council consider carefully what the majority of residents want and need from their elected officials. It is my hope that it is not the goal of Mr. Stuczynski to convince residents and you that leaf blowers should be banned. Rather it should be his goal to gather facts about the blower and the will of the residents and present to you what his group believes is best for everyone.

The trend to ban certain leaf blowers is troubling to me because, except for noise, it is first based on distorted facts and second, lacks empathy for those that need them for their work or want them to reduce their workload at home. The question before you should be, is a ban the right thing to do for your city?

**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. The reason is, I can provide information not commonly known to the average citizen. As an engineer, I deal in facts, not opinions.

Now, 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 city and to the people that own and use leaf blowers in San Jose. 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](#)<sup>1</sup> if you want to see my qualifications and credentials.

Most of what you hear that is negative about the leaf blower is just plain incorrect or grossly overstated. Those making these statements about environmental impact, for example, do not have the firsthand knowledge or background needed to be able to tell when the source of their information is in fact accurate.

It should be of concern to you that all you hear from ban advocates is negative. They are careful not to dwell on the merits of the blower and what the impact of a ban will be on those that use them. 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 leaf blower facts to consider:

- 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.
- Health hazard and environmental impact issues are overstated if not untrue. By way of example, the carbon footprint is miniscule on these small engines and hydrocarbon emission has been reduced by 85 to 90%, required by the government.
- Battery-powered leaf blowers have low power so they must be used longer to get the job done.
- Batteries have limited capacities, which means that more than one battery is required per blower, increasing the cost.

If you want to see proof of what I say above, and are interested in learning more about the modern gasoline-powered leaf blower, this document, it's [appendix](#) and my [website](#) are where you will find the rest of the story.

You may be thinking that because there are other 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. How will it be enforced? Will homeowners with leaf blowers be upset? How does this impact the elderly? What will be the cost impact to the homeowner and landscape contractor? Will current users comply with your ordinance? Will people use time consuming tools, or will they just leave the debris where it lies? Is a battery powered leaf blower truly a replacement for a gasoline version, performance wise?

If you decide to check it out, you can talk to council members from 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. 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?

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](#)<sup>4</sup>. 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'm sure you know from your experience with the media that if something deleterious is said often enough, regardless of the facts, people will tend to believe it as being true. Others will then proceed to confidently restate these unproven hypotheses emphatically. Proof of that is the biased TV segment about blowers by [CBS News Sunday Morning](#), wherein I was interviewed on camera for more than two hours. The result was, out of a six-and-a-half-minute segment, they used less than 30 seconds of what I had to say, completely ignoring the facts I provided that would discredit the false claims others were making. I think this is called "[spinning](#)"<sup>3</sup>.

On the other hand, the local people that are trying to convince you to ban leaf blowers, such as Mr. Stuczynski, are well meaning, conscientious, and dedicated to improving the environment. Always keep in mind that the underlying driving force is that they are irritated by leaf blower noise. But other than noise, what they are telling you in their zeal to ban blowers is erroneous. 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.

Am I biased? Sure! But my bias is to present the facts, based on my 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](#)<sup>23</sup> 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 to do the job at hand, they will replace gasoline power by their own merits. You need only visit your local outlet store to see how popular battery-powered leaf blowers are among those with light duty, consumer type applications. Allow the professional user to retain the use of their gasoline-powered units, if they are quiet and until battery blowers can provide adequate power.

Please, read the 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 with a light blue shadow effect behind the text.

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