

June 5, 2020

TO: Mayor Karen A. Tarapata

**CC: Board of Trustees
Upper Nyack, NY**

From: [Larry Will](#)



Reference: <https://www.lohud.com/story/news/coronavirus/2020/05/20/nyack-coronavirus-leaf-blower-bans/5220185002/>

I see that Upper Nyack is considering a seasonal leaf blower ban, according to the referenced article. My assumption is that this refers to gasoline-powered leaf blowers because that is the design with which most people are taking issue. I have some information about these tools I would like to share with you.

I am a former Vice President of Engineering for Echo Inc., a leading manufacturer of powered lawn care products. I am not a stake holder in the above proposed regulation, nor am I trying to interfere with any decision you deem necessary for your city, but I am a source of facts that you should consider before you make up your mind on this issue. The information I have included in this commentary is based partly on my own personal experience of 26 years within the industry and partly on reputable sources of information to which I provide Internet links. As a leaf blower expert in design, manufacture, and application, I am in a unique position to supply these facts.

Somewhere someone decided that leaf blower use over the summer months was unnecessary. Only a person that has never maintained a yard or used a leaf

blower, could sincerely think that way. I find that I need the leaf blower all year round. Every time it rains or when I cut the grass or trim my hedges, my driveway and courtyard are covered with debris. I even have trees that shed their leaves, seeds, and acorns all summer. Of course, it is not as bad as it is in the fall, when almost all the leaves are shed, but that only means that in the summer, it will take less time to remove nature's residue.

One other thing to think about is what a ban would do to the professional lawn care provider. It will take him [ten times longer](#) to clean up the yard debris after completing the maintenance of someone's property. The added cost could either put him out of business or, at the very least, increase the cost to his customers.

One should wonder why people are so upset with the leaf blower. You hear all sorts of arguments in support of this mindset, but truthfully, it is only the noise blowers make that bothers people. [Exhaust emission](#) and [particulate matter](#) or [PM10 and PM2.5](#), are not viable issues against the leaf blower. Neither is the Corona virus. Leaf blowers are used outdoors, and a virus [cannot survive in sunlight or ultraviolet light](#). This complaint has no merit. It is not the virus that is the issue, it's the noise that bothers the people that for the first time are working from home during the pandemic. There are lots of noise sources in a residential area, why the leaf blower is singled out, is hard to understand. But you should know that there are organized and substantially financed groups of people, from outside your village, that champion this cause. [Quiet Communities](#), a national organization, is one such association. This group is supported by several likeminded [groups](#), including some members of the battery power tool industry. I could go on, reiterating the reasons why these and all other complaints about leaf blowers are invalid, except for noise, but that would waste your time.

When talking about noise, there are [many things to learn](#) about sound in order to understand what it truly is. But to simplify the concept, consider that sound is nothing more than the movement or vibration of air molecules. As they move, ever so slightly, the ear can sense its magnitude and frequency. In other words, you can easily decide if it is easy to listen to or does it irritate you? It is this subjective evaluation that is at the bottom of the leaf blower issue. I admit that there are leaf blowers in service that are nothing but irritating. And when they are used at inappropriate times, they can be even more offensive. These are the blowers that should be removed from service.

It is possible to measure sound magnitude, but not so easy to measure an irritation quotient. So, the best we can do after reducing sound level is measure and publish the result. However, in the process of reducing sound, the irritating noise or scream from the main air impeller has also been removed. Units indicating 65 dB(A) at 50 feet are considered quiet blowers. On gasoline powered leaf blowers, that [number is provided](#) on the unit, making it easy to determine magnitude in the field. That means an ordinance can stipulate the noise limit based on that number and enforcement becomes easier.

Because sound volume is expressed in decibels, which is a logarithmic value, the actual number can be misleading. The fact is, for every six dB(A) reduction in sound magnitude, the actual volume is reduced by 50%. This is hard to believe for the average person, so the best thing to do is to witness an actual sound comparison, but I know that it's not easy to arrange this. An alternative is to check out the [video](#) of an actual demonstration on my website. The difference between a loud blower and one that is quiet is impressive. You might be surprised to learn that battery powered leaf blowers are not as quiet as you may have been led to believe. In addition, keep in mind that cordless leaf blower performance is just not there yet for the professional.

In the automotive industry, years ago, cars and trucks were unsafe to drive, and their engines generated a lot of exhaust emission. Were they banned? No! This is because these issues were corrected by this industry. The same is true of the lawn care industry in general and more specifically, the leaf blower.

Manufacturers have invested millions of dollars in tooling, testing and new assembly lines in order to provide quiet leaf blowers, a valuable and viable alternative to noisy blowers. There is no real reason to ban leaf blowers that have been improved.

To arrive at a bill that will reduce leaf blower noise with less controversy, here are some suggestions:

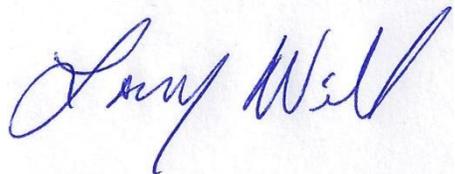
1. Require that gasoline powered leaf blowers be limited to 65 dB(A) in residential areas as measured per ANSI Standard B175.2. In other words, ban the noisy leaf blower, not all gasoline powered leaf blowers.

2. Develop printed materials for the purpose of educating and informing the private user, as well as the professional, on how to safely and properly use a leaf blower, including acceptable hours of use. Here are some examples:

https://www.leafblowernoise.com/Pointers_Operating_Leaf_Blower_flier.pdf
<https://www.leafblowernoise.com/LeafBlowerTraining.pdf>

Thank you for taking my comments under consideration. 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 fluid and cursive, with the first name "Larry" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Will".

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