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TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Corren Johnson, Director – Department of Transportation
DATE	June 24, 2024
SUBJECT	23-0367 Prohibition - Gas-Powered Debris Removal Equipment

Position: No Objection

Introduction

For the purpose of prohibiting the use of gas-powered debris removal equipment in Baltimore City; defining certain terms; establishing procedures for reporting the use of gas-powered debris removal equipment; establishing certain penalties; and providing for a special effective date.

DOT Analysis

Council Bill 23-0367 would ban the use of gas-powered leaf blowers and leaf vacuums. As one of the City's largest landscaping operations, the Department has concerns about the potential impacts. The estimated cost of replacing the Department's stock of gas-powered leaf blowers with battery-powered equivalents ranges approximately between \$8,500 and \$17,000. In addition to equipment costs, staff have raised concerns with the performance power and effectiveness of battery-powered equipment. The batteries have a runtime of approximately 28 min. and require 80 – 150 min. to fully recharge. This limitation would slow down and impact operations. More powerful equipment options could cost approximately \$38,000 and provide approximately 63 min. of runtime. Additionally, City contractors who perform landscaping work on behalf of the Department would be required to purchase new equipment which could drive higher bid prices, more hours to complete work, and change orders for existing contracts.

The Department acknowledges the environmental and noise concerns surrounding the use of gas-powered leaf blowers and vacuums and supports ways to improve our environment and improve quality of life. However, the proposed legislation may negatively affect the Department's landscaping operations.

Conclusion

The Department has operational concerns with but does not object to the advancement of Council Bill 23-0367.