



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

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| TO | The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council |
| FROM | Khalil Zaied, Acting Director, Dept of Public Works <i>Khalil Zaied</i> |
| DATE | June 24, 2024 |
| SUBJECT | City Council Bill 23-0367 (Prohibition – Gas-powered Debris Removal Equipment) |

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400

6/24/24

Position: Support with Amendments

SUMMARY OF POSITION

City Council Bill 23-0367 would prohibit the use of gas-powered debris removal equipment in the City of Baltimore one year after the enactment date of the legislation. The prohibition would affect leaf blowers and leaf vacuums. Enforcement would be through environmental citations or civil citations and could lead to criminal penalties.

The Department of Public Works performs landscaping maintenance at its facilities and as part of its duties under its Cleaning and Boarding, cleaning and mowing of vacant properties and lots, and street and alley cleaning services. In addition, the Department does contract with landscaping vendors to assist with this type of maintenance work. The following chart lists the number of gas-powered debris removal equipment currently in use that would be prohibited under this legislation:

| Division | Type of Blower | Quantity |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Wastewater Facilities | Gas | 20 |
| Water Facilities | Gas | 18 |
| Solid Waste | Gas | 24 |

The Water Facilities Division uses commercial grade backpack blowers. To replace the gas-

powered blowers with comparable electric (battery) blowers is estimated to cost \$41,400 as shown in the chart below.¹

| | Gas | Electric |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Number (units in WFD) | 18 | 0 |
| Cost (per unit) | \$500 | \$2,300 |
| Weight (lbs/unit) | 22 | 36 |
| Run time (hrs. per tank/battery) | 1.1 | 1 |
| Blowing Force (N) | 32 | 26 |
| | | |
| Total Cost | \$9,000 | \$41,400 |

Additionally, the Solid Waste Division records that replacing existing gas-powered blowers, currently priced at \$217 per unit, with electric models would increase the cost per unit to \$378. The total cost for the gas-powered blowers is \$5,208.00 and for the electric (battery) units is \$9,072.00. these totals do not include fuel costs of extra batteries.

Property Management Blowers

| | Electric | Gas |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Number of Units | 24 | 24 |
| Cost per Unit | \$378 | \$217 |
| Weight | 2.7lbs | 8.6lbs |
| Run Time per tank / per battery | 130 minutes | 240 minutes |
| MPH - force | 219mph | 170mph |
| Sound Level | greater than 65dB | greater than 65dB |

¹ The link below is a comparable gas powered unit that is currently used by water Facilities: [BR 600 STIHL Magnum® - Professional Use Backpack Blowers | STIHL USA](https://www.stihlusa.com/products/blowers-and-shredder-vacs/battery-blowers/bga300/?aqid=9a6bce2fcf5f7eb372fec9b383a50dc4) The hyper link below is the electric equivalent to what Water Facilities currently uses. It is 4x more expensive, almost 50% heavier and only has a 1 hour run time.
<https://www.stihlusa.com/products/blowers-and-shredder-vacs/battery-blowers/bga300/?aqid=9a6bce2fcf5f7eb372fec9b383a50dc4>

The Department supports the Administration's recommendation that the bill be amended to include a specific prohibition date of October 1, 2025 for agencies. This date would ensure that the transition from gas-powered to electric would be met, both by agencies and by landscape vendors performing work for the agencies. The recommended October 1, 2027 deadline for Baltimore City businesses and residents would provide sufficient time for them to learn of and comply with the prohibition. In addition, this Department concurs with the recommendations proposed by the Environmental Control Board to amend the legislation giving them the jurisdiction and authority to offer and hear appeals for citations issued for violations of the proposed new law and to impose the stipulated penalties.