Attachment "C"

[Date]

The Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers, a Citywide Health and Safety Concern: Request for an Equitable Program to Enforce LAMC 112.04(c) / CF 24-0055

Dear Councilmembers:

On November 18, 2026, at a duly noticed special meeting of the Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council at which a quorum was present, the Board voted [__] in favor, [__] opposed, and [__] abstaining to send this letter and to file a Community Impact Statement on Council File 24-0055.

We urge the City Council to make enforcement of Los Angeles's gasoline-powered leaf blower prohibition a priority. The desire to have a tidy yard should not come at the expense of the people who maintain it or the families living nearby. Gas-powered leaf blowers (GLBs) contribute to air pollution, create particular concerns for children, and expose the landscape workers who operate them to hazardous noise and exhaust. In our fire-prone hillside communities, gasoline-powered equipment also introduces avoidable ignition risks.

LOS ANGELES ALREADY HAS A LAW ADDRESSING GLBS, BUT EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT HAS REMAINED A LONGSTANDING PROBLEM.

Since February 13, 1998, Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 112.04(c) has prohibited their use within 500 feet of a residence at any time. The ordinance applies both to operators and to those who hire them. In January 2025, the City Council adopted then-Councilmember Nithya Raman's motion (CF 24-0055), which acknowledged the inadequate enforcement resources and directed StreetsLA to report back within 60 days. The reports were to cover complaints and citations, enforcement options such as citing property owners rather than gardeners and moving enforcement away from LAPD, and an education and outreach program for gardeners and homeowners. The reports were due in March 2025. More than eighteen months later, StreetsLA has not filed them. 28 years after the prohibition first took effect, Los Angeles residents deserve consistent enforcement that makes this protection meaningful.

GASOLINE LEAF BLOWERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR LARGE AMOUNTS OF POLLUTION

Most gas leaf blowers use inefficient two-stroke engines that burn a mixture of gas and oil and lack modern emission controls. As a result, they fail to fully combust fuel and they release roughly 30% of

their gas-oil mixture directly unburned into the air. Studies highlighted by the EPA and public health organizations note that these engines release high levels of hazardous pollutants, including benzene, 1,3-butadiene, formaldehyde, and fine particulate matter. They also emit gases that contribute to ground-level ozone formation. In addition to impacting respiratory health and increasing asthma risk and severity, these pollutants are associated with numerous health outcomes including autism, cancer, heart disease, and dementia.

Los Angeles ranks #1 in the U.S. for the highest ozone levels and #7 for annual particle pollution, according to the American Lung Association's 2026 State of the Air report. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has estimated that one hour of commercial gas-powered leaf-blower operation produces as much smog-forming pollution as driving a new passenger car approximately 1,100 miles, which is equivalent to driving from Los Angeles to Denver. And in its 2021 assessment, CARB reported that small off-road engines, most of them lawn and garden equipment, collectively produced more smog-forming emissions statewide than all light-duty passenger cars combined.

According to Mount Sinai, children are highly susceptible to the health hazards of GLBs because they breathe more air per pound of body weight per day than adults and thus inhale more of any pollutants that are thrown into the air by this equipment. Children's vulnerability is further magnified by the fact that their lungs, ears, eyes, and other organ systems are still developing, making them inherently more sensitive to environmental hazards than the organs of adults.

NOISE HARMS THE WORKERS WHO OPERATE THEM AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY.

The workers operating this equipment face repeated exposure. Gardeners and landscape crews work close to exhaust and engine noise, often at multiple properties throughout the day. NIOSH reports that a study of landscaping equipment measured maximum leaf-blower sound levels ranging from 95 to 106 A-weighted decibels, depending on the model, which can cause permanent hearing loss with repeated exposure. A NIOSH study involving 80 landscapers at 11 worksites found that most workers' measured daily noise exposures exceeded the agency's recommended limit. Fuel-powered leaf blowers, string trimmers, and chainsaws produced greater noise and carbon monoxide exposure than battery-powered versions. In a NIOSH comparison of two crews at the same landscaping company, workers using battery-powered tools averaged 78 to 82 decibels over a shift, while the crew using gas-powered tools averaged 92 to 99 decibels, high enough to require a hearing loss prevention program. These workers also inhale direct exhaust day after day, and the resulting health hazards, including respiratory and cardiovascular risks and exposure to cancer-causing compounds such as benzene and 1,3-butadiene, fall disproportionately on them.

Noise also affects the surrounding community. Gas-powered leaf blowers disrupt neighborhoods by emitting low-frequency sounds that travel long distances and easily penetrate walls and closed windows, which disrupts remote work, interrupts conversations, and disrupts sleep.

FIRE SAFETY ADDS ANOTHER CONCERN IN HIGH AND VERY HIGH FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES.

Gasoline spills and vapors can ignite near hot engine parts, while hot exhaust components or escaping exhaust sparks can ignite dry vegetation. Federal and state fire agencies identify hot exhaust, malfunctioning spark arresters, and refueling among the ways engines and equipment can start wildfires. CAL FIRE requires spark arresters on all portable gasoline-powered equipment in wildland areas and urges users to keep exhaust systems in good condition. Reducing gasoline-powered equipment use removes these particular ignition sources from our hillsides.

CONCLUSION

We call on the members of City Council to require StreetsLA to deliver the reports ordered under CF 24-0055 without further delay. Beyond that, the City needs an equitable program that makes real enforcement possible, rather than continuing to leave the ban unenforced. Someone at the City must be responsible for enforcement and have the resources to do it, residents need an easy way to report violations, and the public should be able to see the results.

We leave the design of that program to the City. Options worth considering include licensing, whether by tying compliance to the business licenses and registrations that landscaping businesses already hold or by creating a separate license for landscaping professionals, and helping landscape professionals and homeowners switch to battery-powered equipment through rebate and exchange programs. The South Coast Air Quality Management District already offers commercial gardeners an exchange that covers most of the cost of new battery-powered equipment when a gas unit is traded in and scrapped, and it offers rebates to homeowners who scrap gas equipment. A simple and equitable City program could fill the gaps.

City Council should look to neighboring cities for models. Culver City ties leaf blower use to a permit that commercial operators renew with their business license, Pasadena required annual certification of blowers before banning gas-powered models outright, and Santa Monica lets city staff, rather than police, cite operators, landscaping companies, and property owners, using residents' photos and videos. Its policy protects employed landscapers from responsibility when their employers provide prohibited equipment or direct its use, holding the employer responsible instead. Other useful practices include code enforcement follow-up timed to recurring gardening schedules and escalating fines for repeat violations.

Public education should be an important component of this transition. It should explain the responsibilities of property owners who hire gardening services as well as those of operators. Homeowners need to understand that they can maintain their properties while protecting workers, children, and the health and safety of our neighbors. Training and practical assistance for landscape workers should support these changes.

Los Angeles should stop accepting unnecessary noise, pollution, and fire risk as the price of yard maintenance. City Council must make enforcement a visible, adequately funded priority, with clear accountability for protecting the workers and residents this prohibition was intended to serve.

Sincerely,
Ellen Evans
President, Bel Air-Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council

SOURCES

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Community study of gas-powered leaf blower sound, including low-frequency components, National Library of Medicine, PMC6707732. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6707732

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Fire safety

USDA Forest Service, Technology & Development publication 0351-1306 on spark arresters and equipment-caused wildfires. https://www.fs.usda.gov/eng/pubs/pdf/03511306.pdf

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Rebates and exchanges

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Other cities

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