



[EXTERNAL]Support for gas-powered leaf blower ban

From Tom VanAntwerp <tom@tomvanantwerp.com>

Date Fri 5/16/2025 11:30 AM

To CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov <CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov>

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Members of Council,

I'm writing to express my support for the pending legislation to ban gas-powered leaf blowers in Alexandria.

I am somewhat groggy as I write this, because I was recently woken up too early by the sound of these machines through my slightly open bedroom window. And then I was woken again, while trying to take a nap to compensate, by yet another leaf blower! My point is: these machines make it near-impossible to have full enjoyment of my Alexandria home. I cannot open my windows at all without their incessant whirring noise disrupting my otherwise peaceful existence.

I strongly support eliminating these noisy, polluting machines from our city. Practical, clean, and quiet alternatives exist—it's time we make the switch.

Thank you,
Tom VanAntwerp
Resident, Del Ray

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[EXTERNAL]Three recommendations for the gas-powered leaf blower ordinance

From Jamie Conrad <jamie_conrad11@comcast.net>

Date Sun 5/11/2025 5:09 PM

To CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov <CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov>

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Thanks once again to City Council and staff for proposing a total ban on those infernal, unhealthy and unnecessary gas-powered leaf blowers. I have three recommendations:

1. The ordinance should adopt a phase-in period of 1 year or less.

Staff are proposing a 2-year phase-in period even though staff's own presentation says:

- The public demonstrated "strong support" for a phase-in of one year or less: and
- The City reached out to 57 landscaping companies and only 12 even bothered to respond. A longer phase-in was not listed as one of their "overarching concerns."

The presentation also notes that Montgomery County set a 2-year phase-in TWO YEARS AGO, while Annapolis just adopted a 1-year phase-in. In sum, staff's own presentation supports a shorter phase-in than the proposed ordinance contains.

Landscaping companies will all be equally affected by the ordinance. They could all raise prices to pay for the transition.

For all these reasons, Council should enact a phase-in of 1 year or less.

2. The ordinance should also prohibit use of gasoline-powered electrical generators to charge leaf-blower batteries at a worksite.

Landscaping companies have adopted this devious practice to circumvent gas leaf blower bans enacted by other municipalities. Obviously, this just replaces one source of noxious noise with another. The City should clearly ban it.

3. The City should restrict commercial operation of power lawn and garden equipment to the same hours as construction.

At the outreach meetings, staff seemed sure that the reason power lawn and garden equipment was allowed to be used until 9 pm on weekdays and Saturdays, and at all on Sundays, was to allow homeowners who work 40-hour/week jobs to do yard work. I'm fine with allowing homeowners to continue to do this. But there is no reason to allow commercial landscaping companies to operate during these extended hours. Rather, they should be treated like construction companies and restricted to the same hours of operation.

I'm really proud that my hometown will be the first municipality in the Commonwealth to ban gas-powered leaf blowers. Other localities will use our ordinance as a model. We should make sure it is as good as it can be.

- Jamie

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[EXTERNAL] May 17 Council hearing, docket item #19 Gas Powered Leaf Blowers

From Sunny Yoder <sunnyyoder@icloud.com>

Date Sat 5/17/2025 7:54 AM

To CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov <CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov>

[You don't often get email from sunnyyoder@icloud.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Dear Mayor and Members of Council:

Thank you leading the City's move toward banning the use of noisy gas-powered leaf blowers that pollute the air.

Unfortunately, the noise of other power lawn and garden equipment also makes living in Alexandria more difficult, especially in the evening. Please reconsider the hours permitted to operate mowers, trimmers, chain saws and leaf blowers. The current noise ordinance allows their operation until 9pm. To allow us residents a chance, after our hectic days, to enjoy some peace and quiet in the evening for dinner, homework, taking a walk or sitting outside, please change the evening cutoff hour from 9pm to 6pm or 7pm.

Sunny Yoder

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[EXTERNAL]Gas powered leaf blower ban

From Caitlin Garlow <garlowc@gmail.com>

Date Mon 5/12/2025 7:44 PM

To CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov <CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov>

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Hello!

I just wanted to express my support for banning gas powered leaf blowers and replacing with electric. The phase out period makes sense. I think it will make our neighborhoods so much more pleasant!

Have a great week,
Caitlin

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[EXTERNAL]Small landscape businesses and leaf blowers

From Karen Kusterer <kusterer.karen@gmail.com>

Date Thu 5/15/2025 5:55 AM

To City Council <CityCouncil@alexandriava.gov>

Greetings. I would like to encourage EVERY member of City Council to have a conversation with small landscape business owners before they pass the gas leaf blower ban. I know the gas blowers are noisy and bother folks. I am also aware that they create an environmental impact.

First, we don't know the full environmental impact of new technologies yet. We will all hopefully live long enough to see which resources of the earth get depleted next!

Second, Yes there are the larger businesses that are strong enough financially that they won't get hit with the financial impacts of the leaf blower ban. There are also lots of smaller businesses that are run by the folks on the financial edge of our community. These folks have to do a lot of things around the current laws already just to survive. IT isn't just the cost of investing in new technology. It is that the new technology costs them time in their work.

This is just one more thing to push people already really close to the edge of not being able to survive a bit closer to not surviving.

I saw that the timeline was moved up. Where will this go? Will we really have police chasing our low-income men trying to provide for their families down the streets with their leaf blowers?

As an independent thinking and voter this makes no sense to me. It seems like very classist legislation.

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19
5-17-25

[EXTERNAL]AOBA Comments in Opposition to Proposed Leaf Blower Ordinance (Item 19)

From Scott Pedowitz <spedowitz@aoba-metro.org>

Date Wed 5/14/2025 4:39 PM

To Alyia Gaskins <alyia.gaskins@alexandriava.gov>; Sarah Bagley <sarah.bagley@alexandriava.gov>; Canek Aguirre <Canek.Aguirre@alexandriava.gov>; John Chapman <john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov>; Abdel Elnoubi <abdel.elnoubi@alexandriava.gov>; jacina.greene@alexandriava.gov <jacina.greene@alexandriava.gov>; Kirk McPike <kirk.mcpike@alexandriava.gov>

Cc CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov <CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov>; Jim Parajon <jim.parajon@alexandriava.gov>; Michael Moon <michael.moon@alexandriava.gov>; Jesse Maines <Jesse.Maines@alexandriava.gov>

📎 1 attachment (113 KB)

AOBA Letter on Proposed Alexandria Gas Leaf Blower Ban.pdf;

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Mayor Gaskins and City Council members,

I hope this message finds you all well. Please find attached a letter from AOBA with comments in opposition to the proposed ordinance banning gas-powered leaf blowers that you will consider as Item # 19 on Saturday's agenda. In opposing the proposal, we note that the existing noise ordinance governs intrusive noises and that adopting this ordinance will force a large capital expense on Alexandria businesses at a time of considerable uncertainty due to the proposed tariffs and other impacts on our local economy. Alexandria residents may be forced to bear the costs of these outlays through their rent, which is the only source of income for housing providers to meet their expenses.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or if I can be of any assistance. I extend my best wishes for a pleasant and productive meeting.

Regards,
Scott

Scott E. Pedowitz

Director of Government Affairs, Virginia

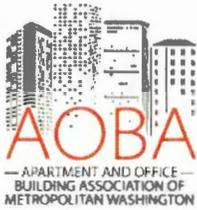
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May 14, 2025

The Honorable Alyia Gaskins
Alexandria City Council
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Gaskins:

The Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA) strongly urges the Alexandria City Council not to adopt the proposed noise ordinance amendment banning the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in the City. The existing noise ordinance is sufficient to govern the appropriate times and maximum permitted sound levels for gardening equipment. Moreover, by rendering unlawful the already-purchased equipment of Alexandria's businesses and residents, adopting this proposed ordinance would force Alexandrians to undertake costly capital purchases at a time of considerable economic uncertainty and price volatility due to rapidly changing tariffs and other federal policies.

As you know, AOBA is the premier non-profit organization representing owners and managers of more than 480,000 apartment units and 157 million square feet of office space in the District, Maryland, and Virginia. Of that portfolio, more than 2.85 million square feet of office space and 30,000 multifamily residential units are located in Alexandria. Our members play a critical role in building and operating the commercial and residential buildings that will accommodate the economy and workforce of the future. As such, our member companies consider themselves part of the Alexandria community and maintain a vested stake in the city's long-term sustainability and well-being.

The City of Alexandria already has a noise ordinance to mitigate intrusive noises, and that code already regulates the use of gardening equipment. This existing code is technology-neutral, focuses on the potential nuisances, and allows individuals and businesses to comply in the manner that is most effective for them. Although the Attorney General has opined that the City Charter gives the Council the authority to enact this leaf blower ban, doing so would be tantamount to micromanaging how businesses and residents operate and their manner of compliance with the noise ordinance.

By adopting this ordinance, the City would force a large capital expense on its businesses at a time of considerable uncertainty surrounding tariffs and our local economy. The feedback from landscaping companies showed a wide range of estimated upfront costs, and we have already begun to see increases in the costs of all kinds of equipment in response to the recently announced tariffs. This ban would be an unfunded mandate on Alexandria's businesses and could potentially raise the cost of living if housing providers are forced to recoup the cost of these capital purchases, or the higher cost of landscaping services, through residents' rents, which are their only available stream of income to meet expenses.

For these reasons, we encourage the Council not to adopt the proposed ordinance, and we thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott E. Pedowitz". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Scott E. Pedowitz
Director of Government Affairs, Virginia
Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA)

cc: Alexandria City Council, City Manager James F. Parajon; Mike Moon and Jesse Maines, Department of Transportation and Environmental Services