



January 30, 2023

To: Chair Marsh and Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and the Environment

**Testimony in support of HB 2528 from Electrify Now**

Thank you for the opportunity for Electrify Now to testify in support of HB 2528. We are a volunteer organization focused on accelerating the transition to electrification and renewable energy. We have been working for five years in conjunction with Quiet Clean PDX and other groups to improve air quality and equity across the state by transitioning away from gas leaf blowers and other gas-powered landscape and groundskeeping equipment.

Small gasoline engines like those used in gas leaf blowers do not have the same pollution controls as automobiles. Because of this, small gas engines are one of the largest emitters of smog-forming pollutants and other pollutants that adversely impact human health and the environment. The noise and toxic pollution created by these devices directly impacts the health of workers in the landscape industry who are often low wage workers. Studies show that exposure to benzene and butadiene from the engines in landscaping equipment increases risk of cancer to workers. The relationship between these pollutants and cardiovascular and respiratory disease is also well documented. The extreme noise created by commercial grade gas leaf blowers can cause permanent hearing loss within minutes.

The public is also exposed to these pollutants and health harms as leaf blowers are frequently used in public spaces and near homes, schools and businesses. Studies show adverse productivity and learning outcomes in children from exposure to loud noise which is becoming an ever more common problem in our communities. And of course, the climate crisis is worsened by the greenhouse gasses emitted by these small nonroad engines.

California has recently signed into law AB 1346, which mandates that landscaping equipment with small gasoline engines will no longer be sold in California starting in 2024. This is an emphatic statement that one of the world's largest economies is ready to move beyond highly polluting small gasoline engines toward cleaner and safer electric alternatives. The landscape industry understands that this is the future, but there is no reason to delay the transition.

We are highly supportive of incentives for voluntary adoption of electric equipment, and believe they are an important part of sensible legislation to reduce the harms from gasoline powered machines. The cost of transition is always cited as a reason not to embrace the high performance, cost competitive electric products that are now available. The federal Inflation Reduction Act includes incentives for large commercial mowers, but these small machines need to be addressed.

As you know, the landscape industry in Oregon is a mix of small businesses as well as larger corporate entities. We think it is important that this bill specifically instructs the Department of Energy to create the rules and procedures for determining eligibility for these incentives in a way that ensures that small businesses will benefit as much as larger landscaping corporations. To that end we suggest exploring all forms of incentives including rebate programs, tool exchanges and other mechanisms that have been used successfully in other states.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

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Founder  
Electrify Now