

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-094**

Expressing support for accelerating the county's transition from the use of gas powered leaf blowers at county facilities, and for convening a work group with the City of Portland to consider an equitable community-wide phase-out strategy for gas powered leaf blowers.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners finds:**

1. Our society is in a climate crisis, fueled by the emissions of greenhouse gases, resulting in an exacerbation of the frequency of deadly and severe weather events such as heat waves, flooding, and wildfires;
2. Multnomah County is committed to addressing the climate crisis, in 2001 Multnomah County and the City of Portland published the *Local Action Plan on Global Warming*, and since 2009, Multnomah County and the City of Portland have partnered to produce and enact the Climate Action Plan, which was revised in 2015;
3. In 2017, Multnomah County and the City of Portland announced a joint commitment to achieving 100% carbon-free electricity community-wide by 2035, and 100% carbon-free energy in all sectors by 2050, a commitment affirmed by Resolution No. 2017-046;
4. In resolution 2018-108, Multnomah County articulated its commitment to environmental justice principles, including the principle that meaningful stakeholder engagement is required when developing policies, and that meaningful stakeholder engagement requires the engagement of those who live, work, play, learn and practice spirituality in the relevant environment;
5. In 2017, emissions from gasoline were responsible for 25% of Multnomah County's total greenhouse gas emissions;
6. Two-stroke combustion engines, which are the most common type of engine used in gas powered leaf blowers, lack an independent lubrication system, resulting in the mixing of oil and gasoline and the emission of harmful toxic substances such as carcinogens, ozone, carbon monoxide, and nitrous oxides, which contribute to the formation of smog and acid rain;
7. Two-stroke combustion engines emit significantly more hydrocarbons and other air pollutants than automobiles per hour of use. According to the California Air Resources Board " For the best-selling commercial leaf blower, one hour of operation emits smog-forming pollution comparable to driving a 2017 Toyota

Camry about 1100 miles, or approximately the distance from Los Angeles to Denver. “

8. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), extended exposure to sounds at or above 85 dBA can cause hearing damage;
9. According to the CDC, gas powered leaf blowers emit an average sound level of 80-85 dBA;
10. A 2017 study published in the *Environmental & Toxicology Studies Journal* found that the sound produced by lawn and garden equipment such as gas powered leaf blowers exceeds the World Health Organization’s (WHO) recommended community noise level recommendation of 55 dBA up to 800 feet from the point of operation;
11. The study published in the *Environmental and Toxicological Studies Journal* found that the sound produced by gas powered leaf blowers can exceed 95 dBA at the operator’s ear, while another published source said that the noise from some models can reach as high as 112 dBA;
12. Gas powered leaf blowers emit particularly low-frequency sound waves, which allow the sounds to travel longer distances and more easily penetrate walls and other barriers, magnifying the impacts of the noise;
13. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reported that exhaust emissions from gas leaf blowers and other gas powered lawn and garden equipment pose significant health risks to operators and the public, saying: "Extensive evidence exists on the adverse health effects of exhaust emissions and other fine particulates which include cardiovascular disease, stroke, respiratory disease, cancer, neurological conditions, premature death, and effects on prenatal development."
14. Studies have shown that environmental noise pollution can contribute to the incidence of arterial hypertension, myocardial infarction, tinnitus, and stroke;
15. Nationwide, at least 44 local jurisdictions have enacted bans on the use of gas powered leaf blowers as of December 2021, and in October 2021 the state of California passed AB 1346, which will phase out the sale of gas powered leaf blowers in the state by 2024;
16. In the December 2019 resolution No. 37463, sponsored by late Commissioner Nick Fish, the City of Portland committed to phasing out the use of gas powered leaf blowers within City Bureaus and expressed support for a work group to consider an equitable community-wide transition to electric and battery powered leaf blowers; and

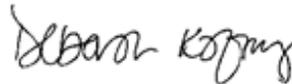
17. Current Multnomah County contracts include a commitment to transition the county's leaf blower usage to electric models by 2025.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners resolves:**

1. To express support for the Multnomah County Chair's action to transition away from the use of handheld, backpack, push, and other gas powered leaf blowers at county facilities to electric models no later than December 31, 2024;
2. To express support for action by County Departments and the Multnomah County Chair to ensure that County facilities are adequately equipped with charging stations and other necessary infrastructure to support the electrification of county-operated or contracted leaf blowers;
3. To support education and communication that informs the public of the health and environmental impacts of gas powered leaf blowers and to encourage County residents to consider electric alternatives; and
4. To support efforts by Multnomah County and the City of Portland to convene a working group to examine an equitable pathway to a county-wide transition to electric and battery powered leaf blowers.

**ADOPTED this 16th day of December, 2021**

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON



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Deborah Kafoury, Chair



REVIEWED:  
JENNY MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By:   
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Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY: Jessica Vega Pederson, Multnomah County Commissioner, District 3.