

MOTION

In 1998, the City of Los Angeles first took action to restrict the use of gas-powered leaf blowers with an ordinance forbidding their use within 500 feet of a residence. Since then, several conditions related to leaf blowers have changed, as has our understanding of the environmental impacts of gas-powered leaf blowers.

Two-stroke engines, which power most gas-powered leaf blowers, release an enormous amount of carbon dioxide, particulate matter, and other pollutants associated with internal combustion engines. In recognition of this, the State of California has moved to reduce the use of two-stroke engines by banning the sale of small off-road motorcycles and all gas-powered leaf blowers by 2024.

In addition to state action, municipalities surrounding the City of Los Angeles including Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, Culver City, and Pasadena have passed a number of measures to restrict the use of such devices or increase the penalties for their use since the passage of the original City ordinance. The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) also operates an exchange program that will provide a rebate of \$250 for the purchase of an electric leaf blower as long as a gas-powered one is turned in to AQMD by a qualified gardening or landscaping business, church, or non-profit organization, as well as a similar program for residential lawn and gardening equipment.

Finally, the volume of complaints that Council District 4 has received from both individual constituents and Neighborhood Councils about the use of gas-powered leaf blowers indicates that the current ordinance is not a significant deterrent to their use in the City of LA. Though LAPD is primarily responsible for enforcement of this ordinance, that duty has largely been assigned to the Bureau of Street Services, which faces a number of difficulties in enforcing the ordinance with its existing resources.

Given that it has been nearly 25 years since the original ordinance was enacted, it is time to reconsider the City's approach to enforcing the ordinance and penalizing the use of these devices with the aim of ending the use of gas-powered leaf blowers within the borders of the City.

**I THEREFORE MOVE** that the City Council instruct the Bureau of Street Services (BSS) to report within 60 days on the number of complaints received and the number of citations issued for gas-powered leaf blower violations in Fiscal Year 2022-23. This data should include the BSS enforcement area and the Council District in which the citation was issued.


**I FURTHER MOVE** that the City Council instruct BSS, with the support of City Attorney, to report within 60 days on the Department's current enforcement mechanisms and process,

PK  
JAN 16 2024

enforcement challenges, additional staffing or other resources needed to improve enforcement, and strategies to provide a more timely and efficient response to gas-powered leaf blower complaints, as well as potential amendments to Los Angeles Municipal Code 112.04 (c) including consideration of the following:

- Implementing a tiered fine system in which repeat offenders incur a larger fee with each subsequent infraction;
- Requiring that all citations for gas-powered leaf blower infractions be issued to the owner of the property on which the violation occurs, not to the operator of the gas-powered leaf blower;
- Naming a City department other than the Los Angeles Police Department as the department primarily responsible for enforcing the ordinance; and
- Equipping the enforcing department to issue fines based on community reports without a BSS inspector personally witnessing the violation.

**I FURTHER MOVE** that the City Council instruct the Bureau of Street Services to report back on developing an educational program on the environmental impacts of gas-powered leaf blowers, current regulations, and programs that provide rebates for the purchase of electric blowers or other trade-in programs. This educational program should include outreach to gardeners and landscapers, using business registration data from the Office of Finance, and outreach to homeowners in areas where citations for gas-powered leaf blowers are most common.

PRESENTED BY:   
NITHYA RAMAN  
Councilmember, 4th District

SECONDED BY: 

ORIGINAL