



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

January 23, 2024

Health and Government Operations Committee

HB 91

***Fossil Fuel-Powered Lawn and Garden Care Equipment -
State Purchase, Use, and Contracts - Prohibition***

FAVORABLE

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), on behalf of our Maryland supporters, strongly supports House Bill 91, which would eliminate the purchase of gasoline-powered lawn and garden care equipment by the state.

People, neighborhoods, and government across the country are moving away from gasoline-powered lawn-care equipment. In addition to the well-documented pollution (including ozone and greenhouse gasses) emitted by these devices, they also have a serious impact on wildlife, as the noise emitted by mowers and blowers can be as loud as a jet plane taking flight.

The gasoline-powered motors on average produce 65 to 80 decibels at 50 feet away, which can cause hearing issues such as tinnitus after just two hours of exposure. And with some of the most powerful models exceeding 112 decibels, hearing damage is caused in just one minute. This has a clear impact on the human using the leaf blower, but also disrupts and disturbs animals in the vicinity of its use.

In fact, studies on noise pollution by similar equipment has shown that they interrupt mating and territorial behaviors in birds and amphibians; elevate stress levels in a variety of animals; drive birds and other animals out of previous habitat; and can even reduce the number of bird eggs that hatch in the vicinity of the noise. (More information can be found at: humanesociety.org/news/birdsong-interrupted.)

By eliminating the purchase and use of gasoline-powered equipment for state purposes, the government can not only make a difference immediately for the preservation of wildlife but can also model best practices for management of various properties. We thank the committee for its consideration of this legislation and request a favorable vote on HB91.

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