

## AN OPEN LETTER URGING SUPPORT FOR ESTABLISHING AN INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO HELP LANDSCAPERS AND MUNICIPALITIES SHIFT TO BATTERY-POWERED LAWN EQUIPMENT

August xx, 2025

Dear Governor Hochul,

On behalf of the signed groups below, we write to urge you to include language in your 2026 budget proposal that will create a statewide program to establish rebates for the purchase of electric lawn equipment in New York.<sup>1</sup>

This proposal will play a critical role in reducing global warming pollution, improving air quality, and reducing noise pollution by promoting the adoption of quieter, zero-emission lawn care equipment.

We request that your budget language offers these rebates specifically for lawncare and landscape companies, as well as institutions such as state and local governments in New York. This will help support local businesses implement more sustainable practices across the state, benefitting all New Yorkers. This concept is based upon legislation introduced in the 2025 legislative session (S.1574/A.2657) that had bipartisan support and made its way through the entire legislative process except final passage in the state Assembly as the session ended.

Research shows that gas-powered lawn equipment produces an outsized amount of air, climate and noise pollution—both in New York state and nationwide.

According to the Respiratory Health Association, gas-powered lawn equipment contributes to ground-level ozone and fine particulate pollution (PM 2.5).<sup>2</sup> Even short-term exposure to these pollutants can cause or contribute to asthma, heart attacks, cardiovascular disease, and premature death.<sup>3</sup>

**It's estimated that in 2020 alone, gas-powered lawn equipment in New York produced almost 1.4 million tons of climate pollution, the equivalent to the emissions from more than 300,000 cars annually.**<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, in a recent study from the Environment America Research & Policy Center, New York State ranked *third* in the country for fine particulate emissions from lawn equipment, and *fourth* in the nation for carbon dioxide emissions.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Senate bill 1574/Assembly bill 2657, <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2025/S1574>

<sup>2</sup> Respiratory Health Association, "Leaf Blowers Leave Lungs Vulnerable," <https://resphealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Gas-Powered-Leaf-Blowers-Leave-Lungs-Vulnerable.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Association, "Integrated Science Assessment (ISA) for Particulate Matter," <https://www.epa.gov/isa/integrated-science-assessment-isa-particulate-matter>.

<sup>4</sup> Environment America, "Lawn care goes electric," <https://environmentamerica.org/center/resources/lawn-care-goes-electric/>.

<sup>5</sup> Environment America, Frontier Group, U.S. Public Interest Research Group, "Lawn Care Goes Electric: Why it's time to switch to a new generation of clean, quiet electric lawn equipment," [https://publicinterestnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Lawn\\_Care\\_Goes\\_Electric\\_Oct23.pdf](https://publicinterestnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Lawn_Care_Goes_Electric_Oct23.pdf).

Gas-powered lawn equipment also emits high levels of carcinogens, such as benzene and butadiene, along with other toxic compounds, including formaldehyde (a known respiratory and skin irritant) and nitrous oxides (which can cause lung damage and disease and is one of the key precursor pollutants that combines chemically to form ground-level ozone).<sup>6</sup>

Incredibly, levels of air pollution from gas-powered lawn equipment are so high that **operating a gas-powered leaf blower for just one hour produces as much smog-forming pollution as driving a car 1,100 miles – the distance from Albany to Jacksonville, Florida.**<sup>7</sup>

Gas-powered leaf blowers also are significant culprits of noise pollution. The vast majority of gas-powered leaf blowers exceed 70 decibels measured at 50 feet, which is considered dangerous to hearing. Additionally, this noise impacts the immune system, causes adverse cardiovascular effects, and impairs the learning, hearing, sleep, and language development of children.<sup>8</sup> Acoustic research also shows that gas-powered leaf blower's distinctive low-frequency noise penetrates further than other machine-generated sound waves, including through solid walls.<sup>9</sup>

The studies are clear: the impacts of both the air and noise pollution from gas-powered lawn equipment put the health of our most vulnerable community members—children, older adults, and those with underlying respiratory and other health conditions—at risk.

Given this, we respectfully ask that you include language to create a statewide program to establish rebates for electric lawn equipment in your 2026 budget. This will help transition New Yorkers away from the use of the dirtiest gas-powered lawn equipment such as lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and other handheld tools.

Thank you for your consideration and support, and please do not hesitate to contact us with questions about this important proposal.

Sincerely,

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. EPA, "Characterization of Emissions from Handheld Two-stroke Engines," <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi/P100GDP7.PDF?Dockkey=P100GDP7.PDF>.

<sup>7</sup> Colorado Public Interest Research Group, "Small Machines, Big Pollution: How shifting to electric lawn and garden equipment can significantly reduce harmful ozone pollution on Colorado's Front Range," <https://publicinterestnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/CoPIRG-Foundation-report-Small-Machines-Big-Pollution-Dec-1-2022.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Erickson, L. C., & Newman, R. S. (2017). "Influences of Background Noise on Infants and Children." *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 26(5), 451-457. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721417709087>.

<sup>9</sup> Walker E, Banks, JL (2017) Characteristics of Lawn and Garden Equipment Sound: A Community Pilot Study. *J Environ Toxicol Stu* 1(1) doi <http://dx.doi.org/10.16966/2576-6430.106>.

- ❖ Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Environmental Health
- ❖ All Our Energy
- ❖ Alliance for a Green Economy
- ❖ Audubon Society of the Capital Region
- ❖ Bash the Trash Environmental Arts LLC
- ❖ Bedford 2030
- ❖ Big Reuse
- ❖ Bronx River - Sound Shore Audubon
- ❖ Buy Local, Grow Local
- ❖ Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care Coalition (CRICCC)
- ❖ Caring for Creation Reformed Church of new Paltz
- ❖ Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY)
- ❖ Church Women United in New York State
- ❖ Clean Air Coalition of Greater Ravena-Coeymans
- ❖ Clean Air Coalition of Western New York
- ❖ Clean+Healthy
- ❖ Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region
- ❖ Coalition Against the Rockaway Pipeline
- ❖ Coastal preservation network
- ❖ Color Henrietta Green
- ❖ ColorBrightonGreen
- ❖ Concerned Health Professionals of New York
- ❖ Deignan Institute at Iona University
- ❖ Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society
- ❖ Dropseed Native Landscapes
- ❖ Earth Eden Sanctuary
- ❖ Earthkeeper Health Resources
- ❖ East River Park Action
- ❖ Environment America
- ❖ Environment New York
- ❖ Extinction Rebellion Mid-Hudson
- ❖ Fairspring LLC
- ❖ Finca Seremos
- ❖ FlyingTrillium Gardens and Preserve, Inc.
- ❖ Fossil Free Tompkins
- ❖ Four Harbors Audubon Society
- ❖ Friends of the RiverWalk Tarrytown
- ❖ Gas Free Seneca
- ❖ Genesee Valley Audubon Society
- ❖ Grassroots Environmental Education
- ❖ Great SouthBay Audubon Society

- ❖ Green Map System
- ❖ Green Ossining
- ❖ Green Party of New York
- ❖ Green Sanctuary Team at Albany  
UU
- ❖ HabitatMap
- ❖ Healthy Yards
- ❖ Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
- ❖ Huntington Breast Cancer Action  
Coalition, Inc. 501(c)(3)
- ❖ Huntington CALM
- ❖ Irvington Green Policy Task Force, a  
committee of the Village of Irvington,  
NY
- ❖ Lady Clippers, Inc.
- ❖ Lakeview Organic Grain
- ❖ Mamaki
- ❖ NRDC
- ❖ Neighborhood Sun
- ❖ New Paltz Climate Action Coalition
- ❖ New Paltz Climate Smart
- ❖ New York Climate Action Group
- ❖ New York Interfaith Power & Light
- ❖ New York Progressive Action  
Network
- ❖ New York State American Academy  
of Pediatrics (NYS AAP) - District II
- ❖ New Yorkers for Clean Power
- ❖ North American Climate,  
Conservation and Environment  
(NACCE)
- ❖ North Fork Audubon Society
- ❖ North Shore Audubon Society
- ❖ Northeast Organic Farming  
Association-Interstate Council
- ❖ Northern Catskills Audubon Society
- ❖ Northern New York Audubon
- ❖ NY Clinicians for Climate Action
- ❖ NYC Bird Alliance
- ❖ NYCD16/15 Indivisible
- ❖ NYPAN environmental committee
- ❖ New York Public Interest Research  
Group (NYPIRG)
- ❖ O.D. Greene Lumber CO INC
- ❖ People for a Healthy Environment
- ❖ Physicians for Social Responsibility -  
New York
- ❖ Possible Rochester | Possible  
Planet, a 501c3
- ❖ Pound Ridge CALM
- ❖ Pound Ridge Energy Action  
Committee
- ❖ Protecting Our Waters
- ❖ Quiet Clean Alliance
- ❖ Reach Out America

- ❖ ReWild Long Island
- ❖ Rockland Audubon Society
- ❖ Roctricity LLC
- ❖ Sane Energy Project
- ❖ SASD
- ❖ SectorOne Realty LLC
- ❖ Seneca Lake Guardian
- ❖ Serenity Lawncare Inc.
- ❖ Sierra Club
- ❖ Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt,  
New York
- ❖ Sisters of the Good Shepherd
- ❖ Solarize Albany
- ❖ South Bronx Unite
- ❖ South Shore Audubon Society
- ❖ Southampton Town Sustainability  
Advisory Committee
- ❖ Southern ADK Audubon Society
- ❖ SUNY New Paltz Environmental  
Task Force
- ❖ Sustainable Finger Lakes
- ❖ Sustainable Saratoga
- ❖ The Climate Reality Project NY  
Chapters Coalition
- ❖ Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and  
Audubon Center
- ❖ Third Act NYC
- ❖ Third Act Upstate New York
- ❖ Tompkins County Climate and  
Sustainable Energy Advisory Board
- ❖ Tompkins County Climate Protection  
Initiative
- ❖ Town of Huntington Gateway  
Garden
- ❖ Town of Mamaroneck Sustainability  
Collaborative
- ❖ Town of Pound Ridge Conservation  
Board
- ❖ United for Action
- ❖ United For Clean Energy
- ❖ Upper Nyack Green Committee
- ❖ UU Congregation of Binghamton,  
Green Sanctuary
- ❖ WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
- ❖ West Branch Conservation  
Association
- ❖ Yonkers Committee for Smart  
Development
- ❖ Yonkers Green City Advisory  
Committee