



**PUBLIC SAFETY**

AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON GAS-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2025

# PUBLIC SAFETY

## AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON GAS-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2025

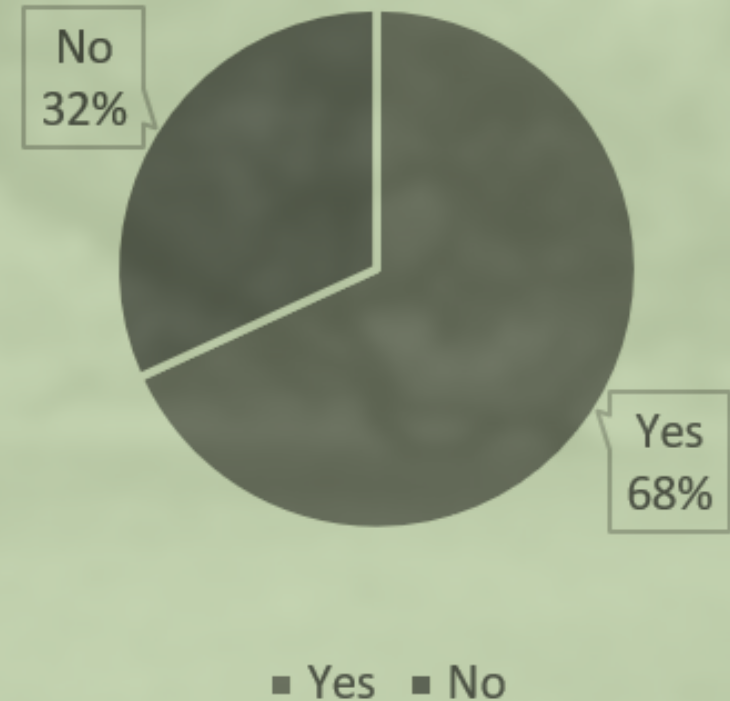
- A. Call to Order
- B. Confirmation of FOIA Notification
- C. Approval of the May 9, 2025 Ad Hoc Committee Minutes
- D. Items for Discussion
  - 1. Discussion of survey results
  - 2. Consideration of strategies and goals for eventual noise reduction, particularly from gas-powered lawn equipment
- E. Adjourn

# SURVEY RESULTS

Are you a year round resident of Sullivan's Island?



Do you see a problem with the use of gas-powered leaf blowers?



# SURVEY RESULTS

Are you typically at home on weekdays during contractor working hours 8am to 6pm?



■ Yes ■ No

Do you contract with a landscaping company to take care of your lawn?



■ Yes ■ No

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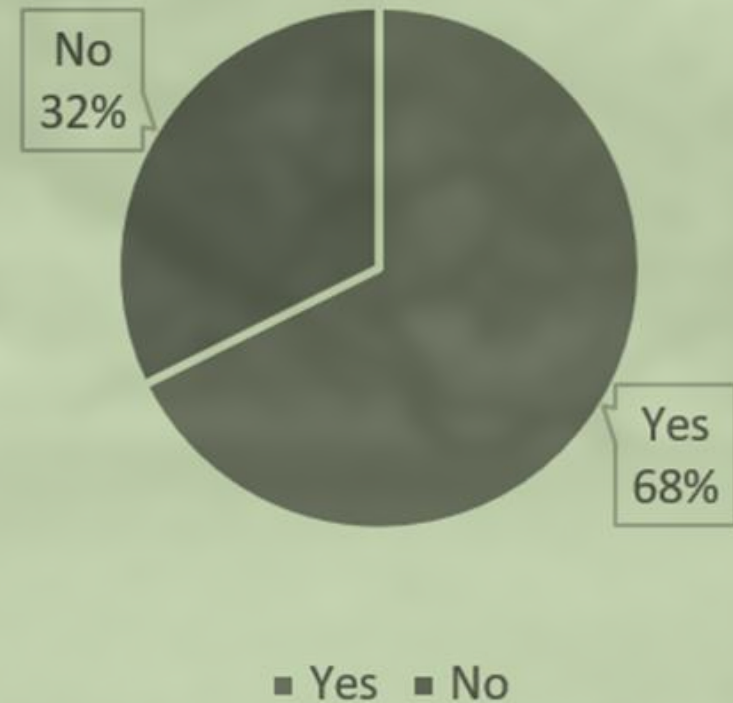
■ Yes ■ No

# SURVEY RESULTS

Do you personally own and use a gas-powered leaf blower at home here on Sullivan's Island?

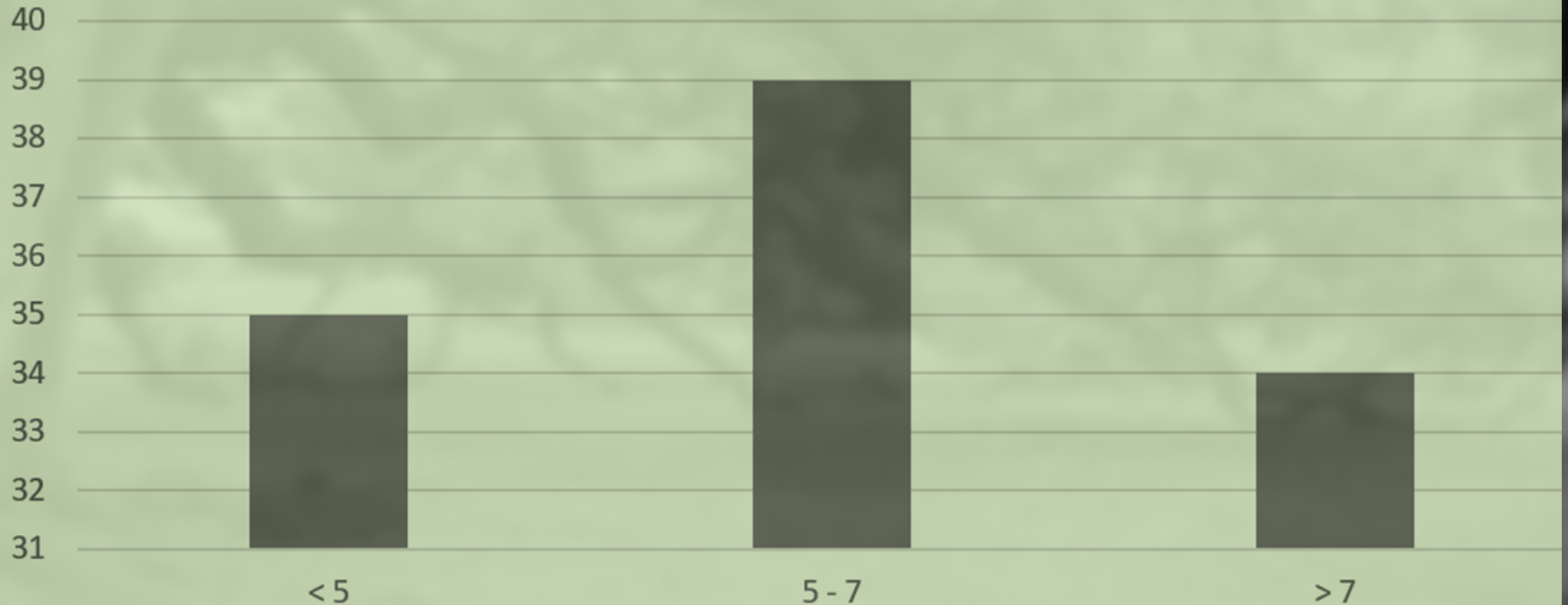


Do you own and use an electric powered leaf blower for your lawn care?



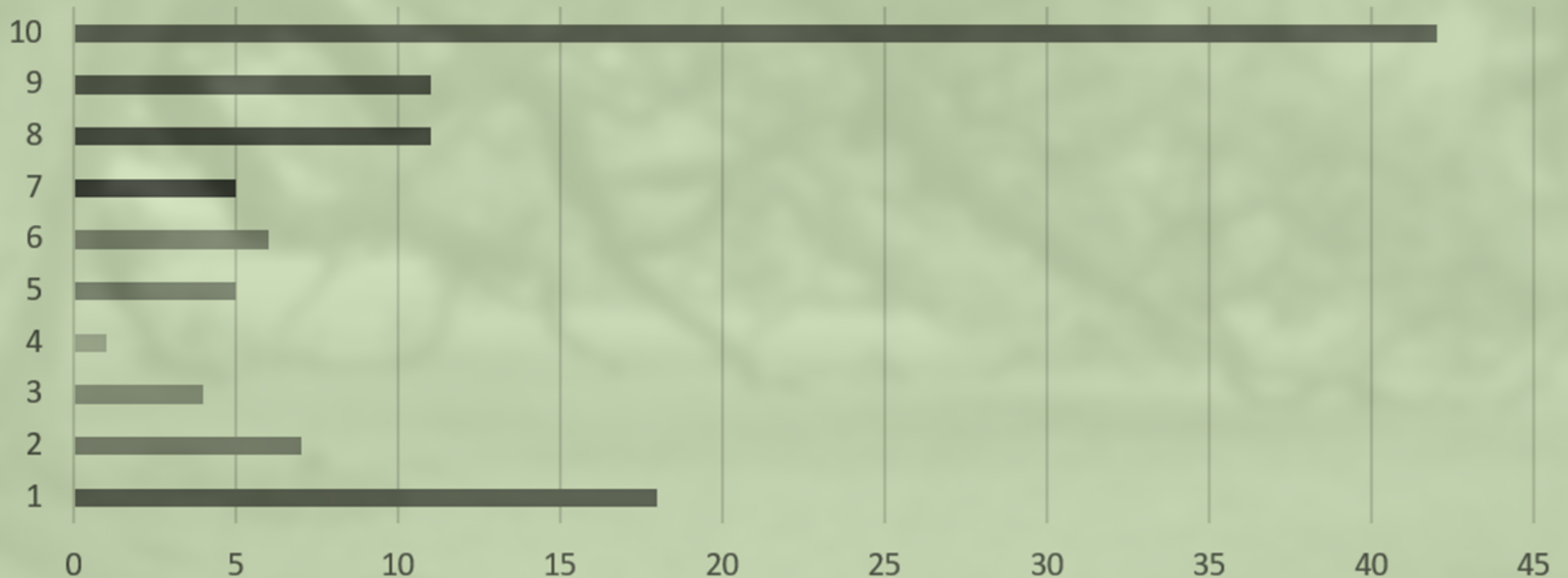
# SURVEY RESULTS

If you had to guess, how many times per week are you within earshot of a leaf blower in use?



# SURVEY RESULTS

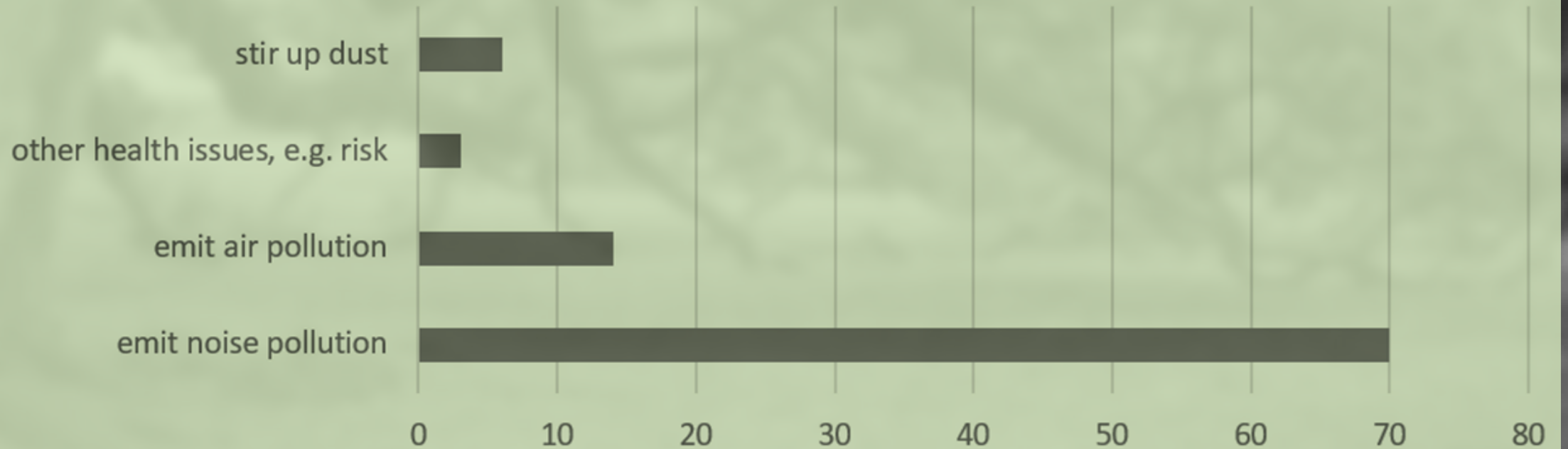
On a scale of 1 to 10, how much does the noise of gas-powered leaf blowers bother you?



# SURVEY RESULTS

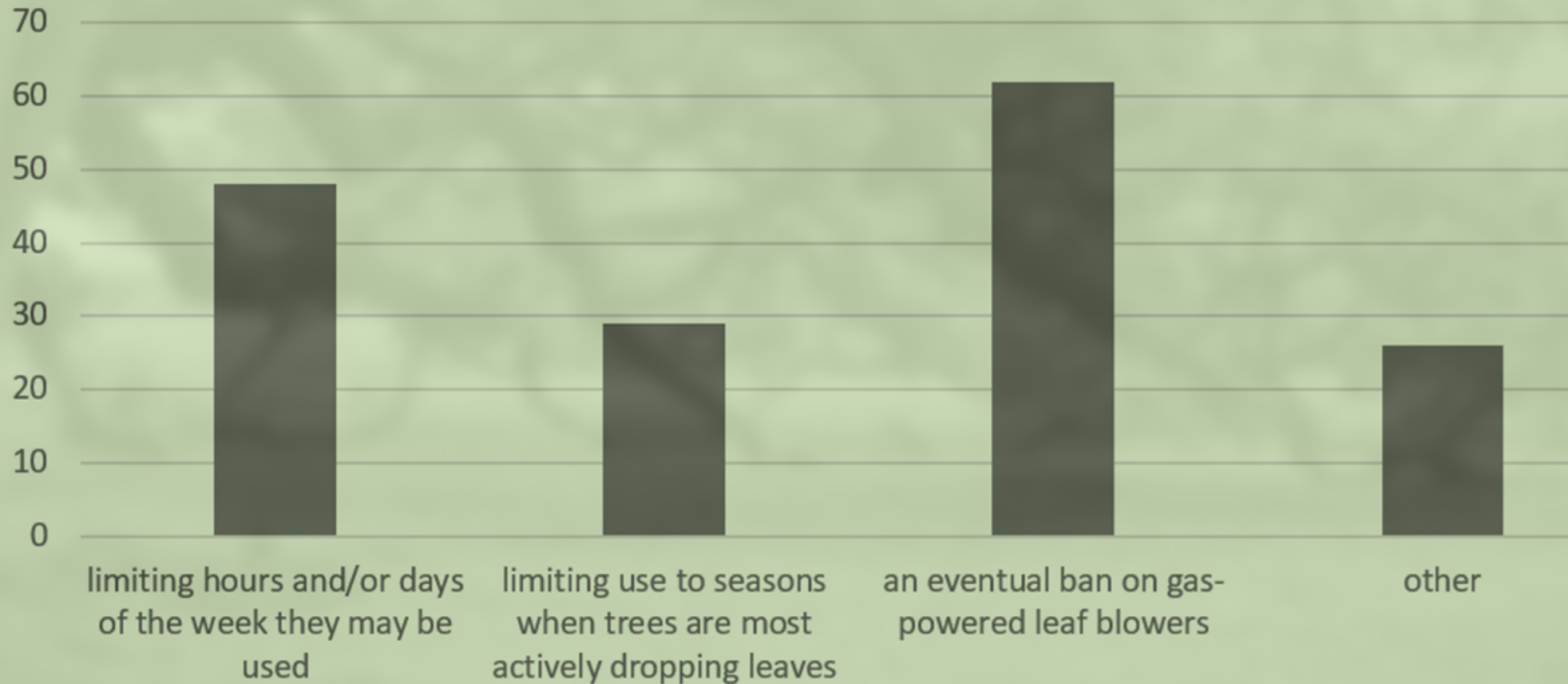
Of the following reasons why some municipalities are regulating gas-powered leaf blowers, please pick the one that you think is the most important reason.

Gas-powered leaf blowers....



# SURVEY RESULTS

In order to reduce the problems generated by gas-powered leaf blowers, would you be supportive of....



# SURVEY RESULTS

**The Washington Post**  
*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

Climate Solutions

## The problem with gas-powered leaf blowers

November 5, 2023 More than 1 year ago

🔊 5 min 📌 📄 1,210

**The New York Times**

IN THE GARDEN

## Why Leaving the Leaves Is Better for Your Yard

Keeping leaves in your yard can bolster the number and variety of species around — and the perks go beyond just the fall season.

# SURVEY RESULTS

Climate Solutions

## The problem leaf blower

November 5, 2023 More than

5 min 1,2



STUDENT INNOVATION

## HEARING IS BE-LEAFING: STUDENTS INVENT QUIETER LEAF BLOWER

*Patent-pending design by Johns Hopkins undergrads could be available in stores within two years*

Jill Rosen / © May 14, 2024

\$

aves Is

e number and variety of  
d just the fall season.

# SURVEY RESULTS

The W  
Demo

Climate Solutions

## The problem leaf blowers

November 5, 2023 More than 1 year ago

5 min 1,210

### Sullivans Island News

## Sullivan's Island Town Council committee discusses banning gasoline-powered leaf blowers

Step hailed by some as a possible game-changer for Sullivan's Island. Only people who can hear or who breathe would be impacted



ROBERT W HELLER  
JUL 22, 2025



Share



Times

## Leaves Is d

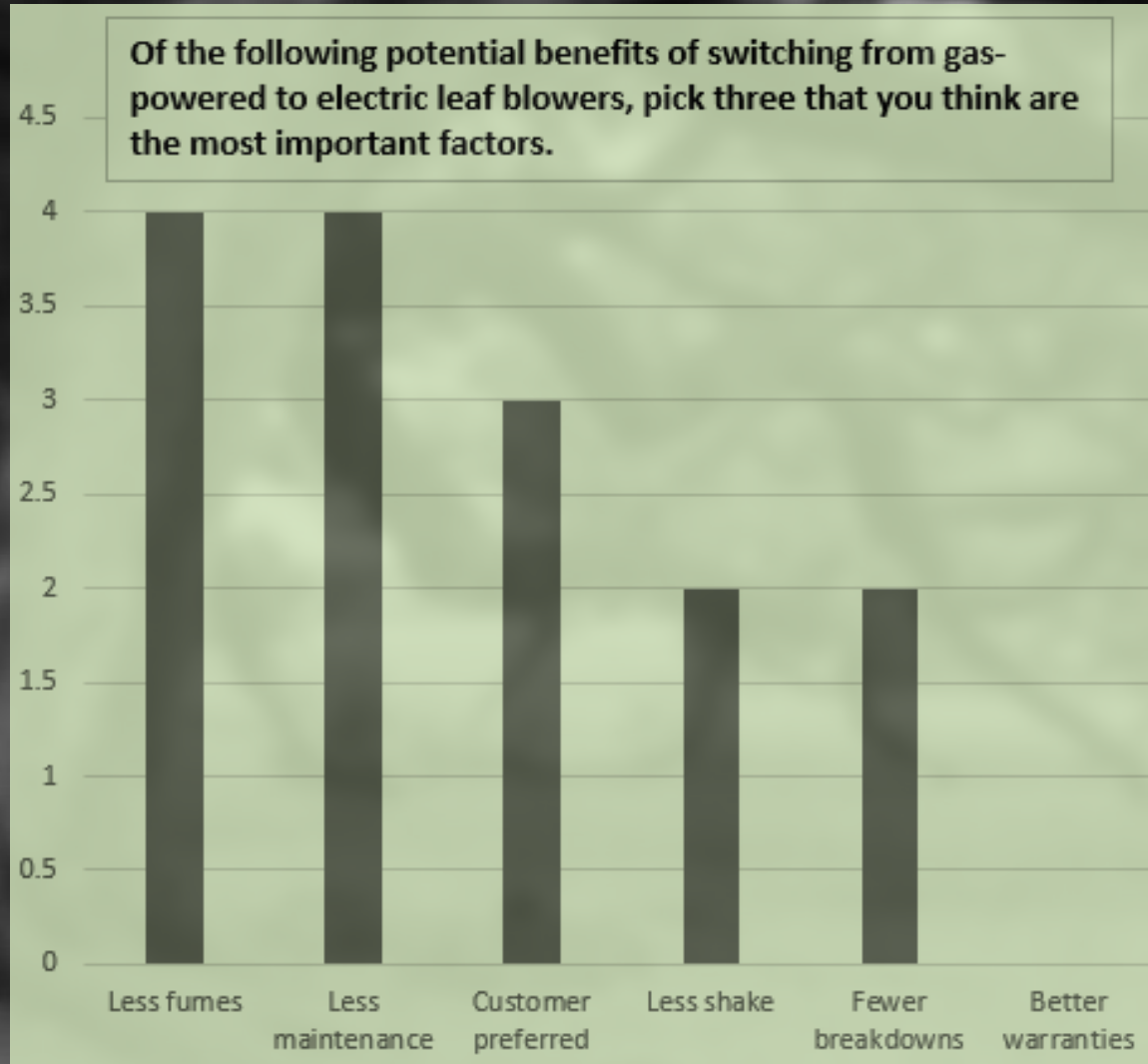
ter the number and variety of  
beyond just the fall season.

# SURVEY RESULTS

**Is there anything else you would like the committee to consider as they explore options around reducing the impacts of gas powered leaf blowers?**

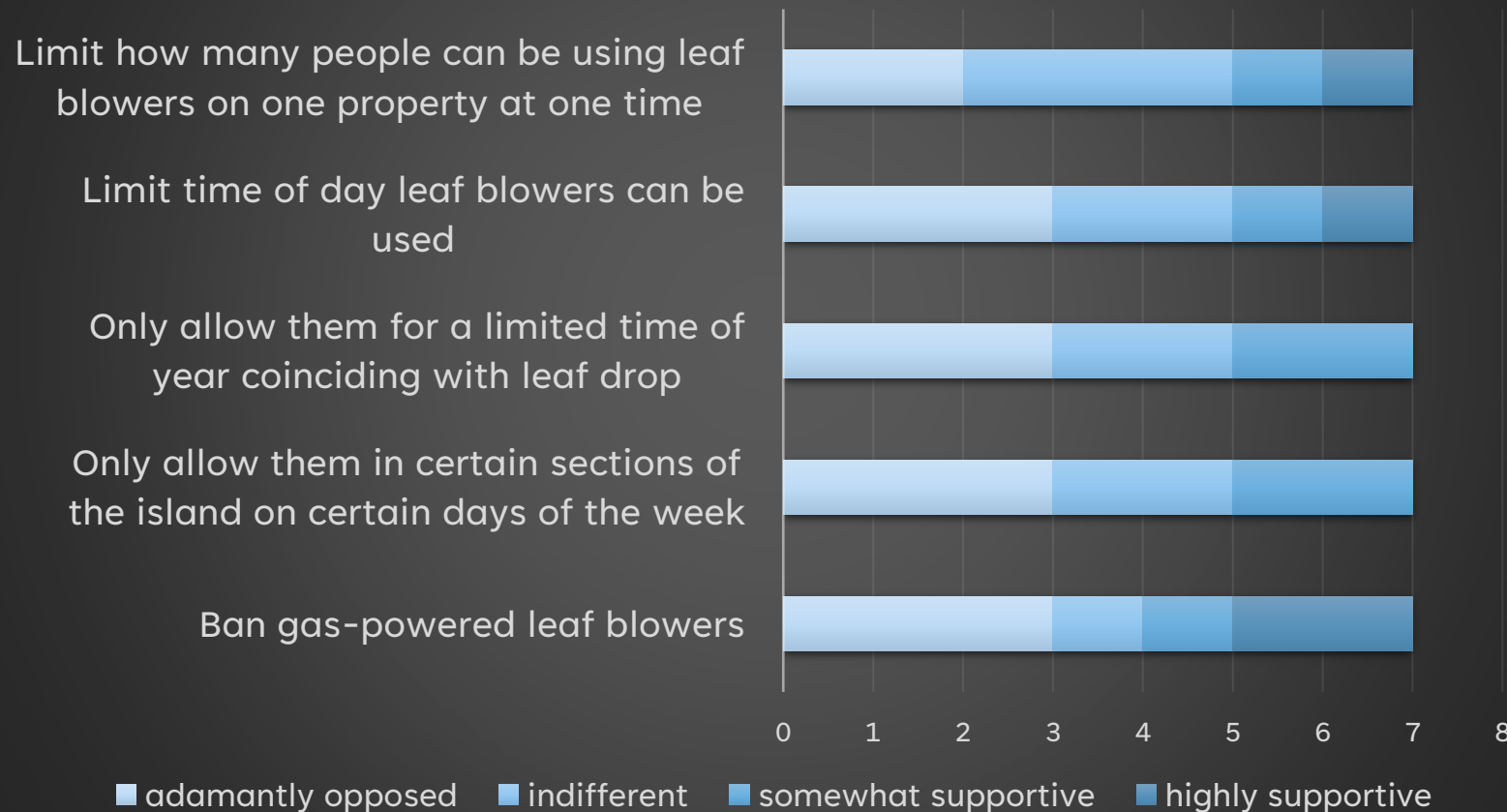
- **Battery life:** what is the state of the options available to commercial outfits, including battery life and mobile charging systems?
- **Noise attenuation:** is maintenance causing the noise issue or is it possible mufflers are being removed?
- **Expertise:** has the committee heard from an industry representative with experience transitioning to electric equipment?
- **Health risk:** what are the various impacts to human health?
- **Time Limitations:** would it be possible to decrease the hours leaf blowers are allowed to operate separate from other contractors, including 'nap time'?
- **Worthiness of further discussion:** is this necessary?

# SURVEY RESULTS



# SURVEY RESULTS

Please rate your level of support for the following regulatory options.





**GAS-POWERED LEAF  
BLOWER AD HOC  
COMMITTEE**

Friday, May 9, 2025 – 9AM



## PUBLIC HEALTH

Pollution from those millions of lawn and garden machines adds up. According to data for 2020 from the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#), fossil fuel-powered lawn equipment emitted ...

- Nearly 22,000 tons of **fine particulates** – pollutants that have been linked to [respiratory ailments, reproductive and mental health issues, and even premature death](#). That's as much pollution as would be produced annually by **234 million typical cars**.
- More than 68,000 tons of nitrogen oxides and 350,000 tons of volatile organic compounds – the two chemical components of **ground-level ozone**, which triggers [asthma attacks and contributes to premature death](#). Nitrogen oxide emissions from lawn equipment are equal to annual emissions from **30 million typical cars**.
- More than 30 million tons of **carbon dioxide**, the leading cause of global warming. That's more climate-altering pollution than was produced in the [city of Los Angeles](#) in 2021.
- A wide array of **chemicals that [cause cancer](#)**, including benzene and formaldehyde. This pollution takes place in our neighborhoods where children, seniors and other vulnerable people live<sup>19</sup>



90% of the caterpillars that use Oaks as a host plant spend part of their lifecycle underground or in leaf litter – not possible when lawn is mowed up to trunks and leaves systematically removed ([Tallamy 2021](#))

One of the key elements to bringing back fireflies would be leaving leaf litter ([O'Brien 2025](#))

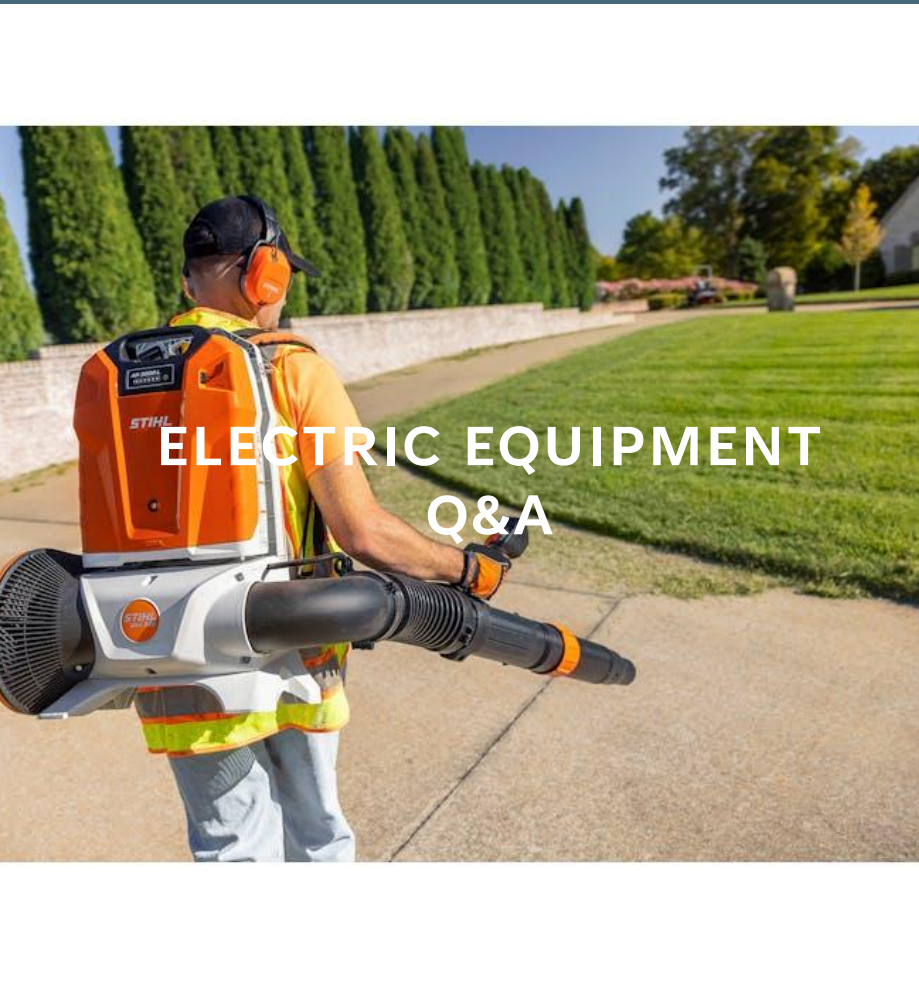
leaf litter of forested area stores ~15% of rainfall ([Kim et al. 2023](#))

A landscape of rolling hills with green and golden fields under a cloudy sky. The foreground is dominated by tall, green grasses. In the middle ground, there are fields of golden-brown crops, possibly wheat or corn, with visible furrows and tracks. The background shows more rolling hills and a few scattered trees under a sky with soft, grey clouds. The overall tone is somewhat muted and atmospheric.

# **ELECTRIC ALTERNATIVES**

## ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT Q&A

- Are they actually quiet?
- Will the batteries last?
- Are they too expensive?
- Other externalities?



Item	Noise	Power	Price
<a href="#">Stihl BGA 300</a> (electric)	62dB	192mph (140min)	\$700
<a href="#">Ego Power+ 800-CFM</a> (electric)	65dB	190mph (120min)	\$600
<a href="#">Ego Power+ 600-CFM</a> (electric)	64dB at 50'	145mph (180min)	\$270
Greenworks 610-CFM (electric)	76dB	180mph (20min!)	\$300
<a href="#">Stihl BR 600</a> (low emission)	75dB	145mph	\$550
<a href="#">Stihl BR 800</a> (low emission)	78dB	238mph	\$650
<a href="#">Husqvarna 150BT</a> (reduced emission)	110dB	270mph	\$350
<a href="#">Echo X Series</a> (regular)	74dB	234mph	\$580

## Examples

Hilton Head, SC	<a href="https://library.municode.com/sc/hilton_head_island/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT17GERE_CH4NOCO_S17-4-113DE">https://library.municode.com/sc/hilton_head_island/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT17GERE_CH4NOCO_S17-4-113DE</a>
Sea Pines HOA	<a href="https://cdn.seapinesliving.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SEA-PINES-CSA-OUTDOOR-POWER-EQUIPMENT-BLOWER-NOISE-POLICY.pdf">https://cdn.seapinesliving.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SEA-PINES-CSA-OUTDOOR-POWER-EQUIPMENT-BLOWER-NOISE-POLICY.pdf</a>
City of Charleston, SC	<a href="https://www.charleston-sc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/30604/City-of-Charleston-Resolution---Electric-Leaf-Blower-October-2021">https://www.charleston-sc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/30604/City-of-Charleston-Resolution---Electric-Leaf-Blower-October-2021</a>
Palm Beach, FL	<a href="https://library.municode.com/fl/palm_beach/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH42EN_ARTIXFEIEUS_S42-372DE">https://library.municode.com/fl/palm_beach/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH42EN_ARTIXFEIEUS_S42-372DE</a>
Washington, D.C.	<a href="https://lms.dccouncil.gov/downloads/LIMS/37820/Signed_Act/B22-0234-SignedAct.pdf?Id=105999">https://lms.dccouncil.gov/downloads/LIMS/37820/Signed_Act/B22-0234-SignedAct.pdf?Id=105999</a>
Montgomery County, MD	<a href="https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/montgomerycounty/latest/montgomeryco_md/0-0-0-138982#JD_31B-9">https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/montgomerycounty/latest/montgomeryco_md/0-0-0-138982#JD_31B-9</a>
Evanston, IL	<a href="https://library.municode.com/il/evanston/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TI8HESA_CH26LEBL">https://library.municode.com/il/evanston/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TI8HESA_CH26LEBL</a>
Maplewood, NJ	<a href="https://ecode360.com/documents/MA1203/public/753065553.pdf">https://ecode360.com/documents/MA1203/public/753065553.pdf</a>
Montclair, NJ	<a href="https://ecode360.com/43039932">https://ecode360.com/43039932</a>
South Orange City, NJ	<a href="https://www.southorange.org/DocumentCenter/View/6860/2022-06_Proposed_LeafblowerSummary_041822">https://www.southorange.org/DocumentCenter/View/6860/2022-06_Proposed_LeafblowerSummary_041822</a>
Portland, OR	<a href="https://www.portland.gov/bps/climate-action/leaf-blowers/documents/draft-leaf-blower-code-proposal/download">https://www.portland.gov/bps/climate-action/leaf-blowers/documents/draft-leaf-blower-code-proposal/download</a>
Burlington, VT	<a href="https://go.boarddocs.com/vt/burlingtonvt/Board.nsf/files/BZVHEF47E454/\$file/B.C.O.%20-%20Offenses%20and%20Miscellaneous%20Provisions%20--%20Express%20prohibitions%20Leaf%20Blowers%20Sec%202021-14.rvi%20.EMB.pdf">https://go.boarddocs.com/vt/burlingtonvt/Board.nsf/files/BZVHEF47E454/\$file/B.C.O.%20-%20Offenses%20and%20Miscellaneous%20Provisions%20--%20Express%20prohibitions%20Leaf%20Blowers%20Sec%202021-14.rvi%20.EMB.pdf</a>
Los Angeles, CA	<a href="https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los_angeles/latest/lamc/0-0-0-193925">https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los_angeles/latest/lamc/0-0-0-193925</a>

## MUNICIPAL ACTIONS

## COMMON RESTRICTIONS

Some **common restrictions** amongst municipalities restricting the use of leaf blowers

- **Noise:** Limits max decibel level to somewhere between 60 and 95
- **Pollution:** Prohibits gas-powered leaf blower
- **Seasonality:** Limits use of leaf blowers to fall months
- **Timing:** Prohibits use before 7 to 9am weekdays, 8 to 10am weekends; longer hours given to residents versus contractors; limited or no use on Sundays, none on holidays

## ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIES

Some **common enforcement strategies** amongst municipalities restricting the use of leaf blowers

- decibels measured at property line
- decibels measured 50' away
- model number must be legible or product specifications available certifying decibel level
- staggered effective dates for compliance:  
contractors serving >10 properties, contractors serving <10 properties, and residents

## COMMON EXCEPTIONS

Some **common exceptions** amongst municipalities restricting the use of leaf blowers

- commercial properties exempt
- government entities exempt
- restrictions lifted in aftermath of named tropical storms, hurricanes, or Town-declared disasters
- ban on use if [Air Quality Index](#) orange to maroon
- residents exempt maintaining their own property

## OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES

Some **other notable features** amongst municipalities restricting the use of leaf blowers

- Leading by example – transitioning public spaces first; mulching in place on public lands
- Regulating based on emission standards
- Allows gas-powered if sound attenuating devices installed

## DISCUSSION

