

SUNDAY October 31, 2021

Dear Mayor Veron and Board of Trustees,

I awoke this morning to the deafening sound of gas-powered leaf blowers in my neighbor's yard, less than 15 feet from my bedroom window. I was struck by the bitter irony that a two-week U.N. conference of world leaders began yesterday in Glasgow to talk about preventing climate disasters. This conference is focused on how the world can avert devastating results including catastrophic floods, wildfires, and heat waves which will destroy entire communities and yield extinction of animals and potential geopolitical chaos. The two-stroke gas-powered leaf blowers, with their deafening surging swarm, are wreaking environmental destruction right here in Scarsdale. As I block my ears and shut my windows, I don't have to wonder why the U.S. is among the world's biggest polluters per capita. In fact, 12% of all U.S. emissions are from lawn care equipment. We have all seen the data equating one hour of gas leaf blower to driving a Toyota Camry 1,100 miles. The moment is existential and it is now. We must think globally and act locally. There is no more time to waste – we need a full ban on gas blowers.

California just banned the sale of gas-powered leaf blowers AND lawn mowers AND any other equipment using small off-road engines used in lawn care and landscaping in early October. The state will also adopt new regulations around emissions. These extremely inefficient two-stroke engines mix oil and gas in their combustion process, spewing these fuels, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, benzene, toluene, formaldehyde and other highly toxic and carcinogenic emissions at hurricane speed onto the lawns where children and pets play. These carcinogenic emissions are dispersed miles in the air -- coalescing into a neighborhood smog that we all must breathe. The particulate emissions blowers produce are deadly, they remain suspended in the air for many hours so that passersby and neighbors have no choice but to breathe the filth these machines are creating. It's time to stop. California has banned them and so have several neighboring Westchester communities. Rye has proposed a full ban on blowers (effective 2023) that it will hear public comment on this week:

<https://mailchi.mp/5ec3b149fae4/rye-sustainability-spring-newsletter-2089822?e=9cfb1fd3d7>. Must we be held captive to an industry that makes its money by literally blasting through jobs, onto the next property? WHY are we delaying?

And on this otherwise beautiful Sunday morning, the gas leaf blowers continue. And continue. And continue. They move from lawn to lawn without being even temporarily shut off as they go up and down and across the street from one property to the next. I know that the stench of gasoline and the particulates they blow everywhere means death -- cardiovascular, pulmonary, and carcinogen-mediated – especially to the landscape crews operating them. I urge the workers to wear a respiratory mask and ear protection. But their ill-health, like the poorer communities and countries that the U.N. conference leaders know will bear the largest brunt of our planet's looming environmental climate disaster, has been socially determined. The leaf blower ban is an environmental justice issue as much as an environmental health issue.

PLEASE Mayor and BOT, what happened to our weekend "quiet days"? Is anyone enforcing this? Is there a code enforcement officer patrolling on the weekends (or the weekdays during this past summer)? My ears and eyes tell me that the change in code really doesn't seem to be working. The angry letters to the Scarsdale Inquirer from Scarsdale residents over the summer seem to validate this

observation. PLEASE Mayor, can we have a full ban? Scarsdale needs to do its part to help avert climate devastation. Let's be part of the solution. A full gas blower ban will be much simpler and easier to comply with, and is clearly overdue from an environmental and health standpoint.

With best regards and appreciation,

Darlene LeFrancois Haber, M.D.