

SB2356

SD1 Late



UNIVERSITY
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MĀNOA

LATE

RL: 2261

SB 2356 SD 1
RELATING TO LEAF BLOWERS

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Government Operations
Public Hearing – February 19, 2010
11:00 a.m., State Capitol, Conference Room 016

By

Peter Rappa, Environmental Center
Eileen Ellis, Sea Grant
John Cusick, Environmental Center

SB 2356 SD 1 prohibits the use of gas power leaf blowers; prohibits the use of electric leaf blowers on or near residential zones, except within allowed time periods and prohibits leaf blowing operations from blowing debris onto adjacent property without permission. Our statement on this measure does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

Gas powered leaf blowers are a loud and potentially hazardous way to remove leaves and other debris from lawns, driveways, walkways and parking lots. There are four reasons to ban or at least restrict the use of gas powered leaf blowers: 1) they're noisy, leaf-blowers usually generate about 70-75 dB; 2) they pollute the air, particulate matter swept into the air by blowing leaves is composed of dust, fecal matter, pesticides, fungi, chemicals, fertilizers, spores, and street dirt which consists of lead and organic and elemental carbon; 3) they worsen allergies and asthma and irritate the lungs; and 4) they waste gas and emit toxic exhaust fumes. A number of municipalities have already banned them or curbed their use including the cities of Los Angeles, Palo Alto and Santa Barbara in California; Portland, Oregon; and a number of municipalities in the suburban area around Chicago, Illinois.

An argument against banning gas powered leaf blowers is that they save time over other means of cleaning debris. UH grounds keepers have done time studies by area and found the difference in time saved to be in the range of 20 percent. No small savings when you consider that UH groundskeepers manage areas anywhere between 5-10 acres of high traffic landscapes. Yet, even they are looking into alternate ways to collect leaves including the purchase and use of new sweeper that can get in to areas that could not mechanically be swept with previous sweeper. We don't see why government entities should be exempt from the ban on gas powered leaf blowers. They make as much noise and cause as much mayhem in the hands of a

government-affiliated grounds keeper as a private contractor or an individual blowing the leaves off his/her yard or driveway. This exemption would make for two classes of people, government agents who can use them and the rest who are prohibited. It is inherently unfair.

Alternatives to gas powered leaf blowers are available. Rakes, brooms and electric blowers are alternate equipment that can perform leaf cleanup tasks. The first two have been in use since antiquity and have been proven performers since that time. Rakes and brooms are quiet and consume no resources. They produce minimal dust and little debris into the atmosphere and no pollutants from the power source. They are also a good way to burn calories and help keep people fit.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

From: Jeannie Bishop [jeanniebishop@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2010 7:00 PM
To: JGO Testimony
Subject: Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 2356, SD1: Relating to Leaf Blowers

February 19, 2010

LATE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
STATE CAPITOL, 415 South Beretania Street CONFERENCE ROOM 016
DATE: Friday, February 19, 2010
TIME: 11:00 A.M.

To: Senator Brian Taniguchi, Committee Chair
Senator Dwight Takamine, Committee Vice-Chair
Members of the Judiciary and Government Operations Committee

RE: Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 2356, SD1: Relating to Leaf Blowers

Dear Judiciary and Government Operations Committee:

I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 2356, SD1: Leaf Blower Control, because my family and I and our many friends have been affected by leaf blowers in a negative way.

Every other Saturday I have to close every window and door in my house to avoid the fumes and obnoxious noise from our neighbors' gardeners' leaf blower. This goes on for over an hour. Every other Monday the same thing happens next door and across the street. The noise pollution often begins at 7:30 in the morning. We can not use our yard during this time unless we want to get gassed out by the fumes and yell at the top of our lungs to be heard.

I sincerely urge you to support SB 2356, SD1. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Jeannie Bishop
269 N. Kalaheo Ave.
Kailua, HI 96734
261-8815

LATE

DATE: Friday, February 19, 2010

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT
TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION,
2010 STATE CAPITOL,
415 South Beretania Street
CONFERENCE ROOM 225

To: Senator Mike Gabbard; Committee Chair, Senator J. Kalani English; Committee Vice Chair,
and Committee Members of the Energy and Environment Committee

RE: Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 2356: Relating to Leaf Blowers

Dear Energy and Environment Committee:

I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 2356 (Leaf Blower Control), because of the adverse impact of leaf blowers (and gas-powered weed wackers) make on the quality of life within our Niu Valley neighborhood. The use of these loud and polluting machines has negatively impacted our lives in the following ways:

- Every weekend, my wife and I have to either endure the obnoxious sound of these machines or leave our comfortable home to avoid the noise. We do not have air conditioning in our home (as many of our neighbors *do not*) and the sound comes right into our home, even if you close the windows and block off the trade winds which we rely on to cool our house.
- Some of the landscapers use multiple machines for several hours at a time and it is just ridiculous to try to endure this. We have timed one of our neighbors who used their blowers and weed wackers for over 4 hours one weekend.) My wife and I both have gone to talk w/ our neighbors in a friendly way to try to resolve the issue neighbor to neighbor, but without having any legal recourse, they shrug their shoulders and tell us 'they will finish when they're finished.'
- All the landscapers seem to come on the weekend for some reason. I work from home twice a week and never see the landscapers come during weekdays. They all come on Saturday or Sunday. Some even continue their work way after 6:00 pm essentially ruining any chance of enjoying our lanai for dinner or relaxing.
- Our valley (as must be the case for other valleys) is a natural echo chamber and any loud activity that happens reverberates across a very large area. We can hear these awful machines (as they rev up and down, up and down, over and over) from several blocks away because of the acoustics of the valley.

We *sincerely urge you* to support SB 2356. We believe July 2011 is too long to initiate the law, but any hope at all would be a good sign for your support of a healthy and civil living environment in our neighborhood and on Oahu. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Name: Scott Keir and Jennifer Burns

Address: 409 Mamaki St.

Honolulu, HI 96821