

March 13, 2015

Huntington Town Board  
100 Main Street  
Huntington, NY 11743

Dear Members of the Huntington Town Board:

Clean and Healthy New York (CHNY) promotes safer chemical use, a sustainable economy, and a healthier world through advancing broad policy and market changes. Along with WEACTION for Environmental Justice, Clean and Healthy New York co-leads the JustGreen Partnership, a collaborative of 50 diverse organizations working for environmental health and justice for New York's people and communities.

We support the Change Code Proposal by Councilwoman Susan Berland to restrict gas leaf blowers during summer months. They pose serious hazards to the health of all citizens - especially our children - and to the environment. Their inefficient 2-stroke engines emit large amounts of toxic and cancer-causing compounds, including benzene, 1,3-butadiene, toluene, formaldehyde, and other polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons directly into the air around our homes, parks and schools. While one blower produces harmful levels of pollutants, many landscaping companies use several blowers per property, multiplying the risks and levels of toxic pollution, especially when used day after day.

Children are among the groups most vulnerable to the negative health effects from gasoline leaf blowers due to their developing organ systems, small body mass, rapid respiratory rate, and hand-to-mouth behavior. Children exposed to small amounts of toxic chemicals at crucial periods of development can face long term effects including increased risk of certain types of cancer, developmental disabilities and respiratory diseases.

Gas leaf blowers also produce fine particulate matter that is known to cause cancer, heart disease, and respiratory distress, especially in those with asthma and other pulmonary disorders. Gas leaf blowers also generate carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide which combine with volatile organic compounds in sunlight to produce harmful ground level ozone, causing respiratory symptoms and lung damage. These pollutants can linger for hours or even days (depending on weather conditions), increasing the duration of exposure. Even brief exposure has been proven dangerous.

For these reasons, many towns throughout New York have restricted gas leaf blowers. We encourage Huntington to follow suit and become a leader in Suffolk County. Please join the growing number of town boards that recognize the evidence-based science regarding gasoline leaf blowers. We ask that you, as stewards of your town's environment, to amend the code to protect your constituent's health and provide everyone, especially children, with a cleaner, safer environment and better quality of life.

Sincerely,



Kathleen A. Curtis  
Executive Director