



May 20, 2025

To: Bristol Town Council

From: Jennifer Martenson, Chair, Quiet Clean RI

Dear Members of the Bristol Town Council,

I am writing in strong support of George Voutes's petition to restrict the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in Bristol.

I am a resident of Providence, where our City Council is working on [an ordinance](#) to phase out gas leaf blowers within city limits. I also serve as chair of [Quiet Clean RI](#) (QCRI), a volunteer group of Rhode Islanders advocating for quieter, cleaner, and healthier alternatives to gas-powered lawn equipment. QCRI is part of the [Quiet Clean Alliance](#), a national network of citizen groups working toward the same goal in their communities.

Across the country, cities and towns are recognizing that the health and environmental harms caused by gas-powered leaf blowers far outweigh their convenience. Many municipalities have already [adopted restrictions](#)—or outright bans—on their use. The alternatives, such as electric blowers, are significantly quieter (on average, 20 decibels quieter) and emit no harmful air pollutants. Modern electric models are powerful enough to replace gas blowers in nearly all landscaping situations, and many companies are already thriving using only battery-powered tools.

(For more information on the health impacts of gas-powered blowers and the benefits of electric alternatives, please see the attached report, *Addressing the Health, Environmental, and Quality of Life Impacts of Gas Leaf Blowers in Greenwich*.)

Mr. Voutes's proposal—which limits gas blower use to certain times and seasons—is both practical and impactful. If enacted, it would bring immediate improvements to the health and quality of life of Bristol residents.

This issue is especially pressing in the summer months, when rising temperatures worsen air quality. Residents should be able to enjoy time outdoors or open their windows without being subjected to the excessive noise and pollution of gas blowers. Most professional landscapers agree that gas-powered blowers are unnecessary in summer, when only light debris like grass clippings need clearing. Given the available alternatives and the seasonal reduction in need, a summer ban is both sensible and achievable.

Equally important is the public education component of Mr. Voutes's proposal. I urge the Town Council to support efforts to inform residents and landscapers about the risks of gas-powered equipment and the benefits of electric options. At recent hearings at the State

House and in Providence, we heard widespread misinformation about battery-powered tools—misinformation that can slow progress and discourage landscapers from transitioning away from fossil fuels. Local governments can play a vital role in overcoming this barrier by offering accurate information, training, and support.

A recent study found that lawn and garden equipment in Rhode Island generates as much fine particulate pollution (PM2.5) as 623,588 cars on the road. These particulates increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes, respiratory illness, and dementia. The outsized contribution of landscaping equipment to Rhode Island's air pollution presents a significant public health burden that must be addressed.

Please support George Voutes's proposal. By doing so, you'll be taking an important step toward protecting public health and improving the quality of life in Bristol.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jennifer Martenson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Jennifer Martenson  
Chair, Quiet Clean RI  
[info@quietcleanri.org](mailto:info@quietcleanri.org)