

Barbara Nestle
Highland Beach, FL

February 12, 2023

To:

Lanelda Gaskins, Town Clerk
Douglas Hillman, Mayor
Natasha Moore, Vice Mayor
Town of Highland Beach, FL, 33487

Re: Leaf blowers

Dear Mrs Gaskins:

I am aware that leaf blowers are currently being discussed in the Commission but have only been put as a “planned” item (7) on your strategic priority list. Please put this letter on the **agenda for the Commission meeting on February 21, 2023**. I would appreciate to see more urgency in an ordinance heavily regulating leaf blowers.

Many landscapers and private individuals in Highland Beach use polluting and noisy gas-powered leaf blowers which have been banned in many villages and towns of our caliber.

These leaf blowers **generate toxic, carcinogenic air pollution and noise** that far exceeds health and safety standards. Using gas powered leaf blowers are very bad for our health, fragile dunes/barrier island environment, and limit the benefits of living in our five miles of paradise. People come to Highland Beach to enjoy our beautiful nature and beaches and not to be **drowned in noise and toxic fumes**.

There is a lot of science behind this, lowlights include:

Toxic pollution – Using a gas-powered leaf blower **for 30 minutes** produces pollutants equal to those generated by **driving a Ford F-150 truck 3,900 miles**, or as far as from Texas to Alaska.

Harmful health impacts - Ozone and PM2.5s are well known causes of, or contributors to, early death, cardiovascular disease, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, premature births, and other **serious health conditions**. **Even short-term exposure can be harmful**.

Damaging noise - Noise from leaf blowers ranges from **102–115 decibels (“dBs”)**

For these reasons, Miami Beach is phasing out gas powered leaf blowers, Naples, Palm Beach, and other towns have implemented leaf blower regulations/bans. Our paradise of Highland Beach cannot afford to wait longer.

We should as soon as possible discuss a **regulation stipulating that no leaf blower may be operated except one (1) 65 dB(A) electric or battery powered leaf blower per lot during the permitted hours** (TBD), with further specifications about allowed types and some exemptions for larger lots. After a storm or emergency, the mayor could temporarily suspend the law. Violations should end in suspensions for 60 days or longer and shall be subject to penalty.

I appreciate your attention and look forward to hearing an update during the Commission meeting.

Best regards,

Barbara Nestle