

Seattle DRAFT Resolution

Amendment 1 Version 1 to RES 32064 - Leaf Blower Phase Out

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Technical Corrections

Effect: This amendment would correct errors in two of the resolution's recitals and remove a recital that would be redundant as a result. Specifically, landscape professionals are disproportionately Latinx or Hispanic, and the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Health and Safety Administration is responsible for promulgating rules related to acceptable sound thresholds, not the EPA.

Amend recitals in RES 32064 as follows:

WHEREAS, gas-powered leaf blowers most commonly have two-stroke internal combustion engines that incompletely combust their fuel, resulting in the emission of toxic and carcinogenic substances, such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds, which contribute to the formation of ozone, smog, and acid rain; and

WHEREAS, best available data indicate that the use of gas-powered leaf blowers can cause direct harm to people within the vicinity by contributing to localized air pollution, creating excessive noise, and causing other negative health impacts to their operators, who ~~((are))~~ disproportionately ~~((people of color))~~ identify as Latinx or Hispanic (46 percent) relative to overall workplace demographics (18 percent); and

WHEREAS, gas-powered leaf blowers with two-stroke engines emit particularly low-frequency sound waves, including ultra-low frequency, which cause the sounds to travel longer distances and more easily penetrate walls and other barriers, magnifying the impacts of nuisance noise; and

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WHEREAS, the California Air Resources Board determined that operators of gas-powered leaf blowers may be exposed to an average sound of 88–101.3 decibels (dBs), which exceeds acceptable thresholds set by the World Health Organization, the ~~((EPA))~~ United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and Washington State; and

WHEREAS, regular exposure to sound levels higher than 70 dBs can cause hearing damage and loss to operators, and studies have shown that high environmental noise pollution can contribute to the incidence of arterial hypertension, myocardial infarction, tinnitus, and stroke; and

WHEREAS, the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) established a Racial Equity Toolkit (2012) analysis process, wherein the City committed to racial equity and justice principles, including prioritizing stakeholder engagement throughout policy development, especially stakeholders who are directly affected by a policy's implementation; and

~~((WHEREAS, landscape professionals disproportionately identify as Latinx (46 percent) relative to overall workplace demographics (18 percent), putting them at greater risk of the harms caused by gas-powered leaf blowers; and))~~
