



Committee: T&E
Committee Review: At a future date
Staff: Ludeen McCartney-Green, Legislative Attorney
Purpose: To receive testimony – no vote expected
Keywords: #LeafBlowers #NoiseControl#complaints

AGENDA ITEM #4
October 21, 2025
Public Hearing

SUBJECT

Expedited Bill 30-25, Noise Control – Leaf Removal Equipment – Enforcement Procedures

Lead Sponsors: Councilmember Glass, Council President Stewart, and Councilmembers Balcombe and Alborno

Co-Sponsors: Councilmembers Luedtke, Katz, Sayles, Fani-González, and Friedson

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Members of the Public

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- N/A; to receive testimony

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

- Expedited Bill 30-25 would:
 - (1) modify enforcement procedures by repealing the requirement for photographic evidence in complaints of gas-powered leaf blower use;
 - (2) clarify that a single complaint may initiate enforcement of the gas-powered leaf blower ban; and
 - (3) generally amend the law regarding noise control.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- N/A

This report contains:

Staff Report	Pages 1-3
Expedited Bill 30-25	© 1
Economic Impact Statement	© 5
Climate Assessment	© 8

*The Fiscal Impact Statement was not available from the Office of Management and Budget at publication of this staff report.

*The Racial Equity & Social Justice Impact Statement was not available at the time of publication of this staff report. It can be found at the below address when available: [Racial Equity and Social Justice, Economic, and Climate Impact Statements - Office of Legislative Oversight- Montgomery County, Maryland \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/RacialEquityandSocialJustice/EconomicandClimateImpactStatements-OfficeofLegislativeOversight-MontgomeryCountyMaryland)

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M E M O R A N D U M

October 16, 2025

TO: County Council

FROM: Ludeen McCartney-Green, Legislative Attorney

SUBJECT: Expedited Bill 30-25, Noise Control – Leaf Removal Equipment – Enforcement Procedures

PURPOSE: Public Hearing – to receive public testimony

Expedited Bill 30-25, Noise Control – Leaf Removal Equipment – Enforcement Procedures, sponsored by Lead Sponsors Councilmember Glass, Council President Stewart, and Councilmembers Balcombe and Albornoz, and Co-Sponsors Councilmembers Luedtke, Katz, Sayles, Fani-González, and Friedson, was introduced on September 30, 2025. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for October 21 at 1:30 p.m. A Transportation and Environment (TE) Committee worksession is tentatively scheduled for November 3.

Expedited Bill 30-25 would:

- (1) modify enforcement procedures by repealing the requirement for photographic evidence in complaints of gas-powered leaf blower use;
- (2) clarify that a single complaint may initiate enforcement of the gas-powered leaf blower ban; and
- (3) generally, amend the law regarding noise control.

BACKGROUND

The ban on the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in the County took effect on July 1, 2025.¹ An individual who witnesses a violation of the ban and is disturbed by the leaf blower noise may send a complaint to the Director of the Department of Environmental Protection, but the complaint

¹ The County Council enacted Bill 18-22, Noise Control – Leaf Removal Equipment – Amendments on September 26, 2023: [Montgomery County Council - Legislative Information Management System – bill details](#)

must include photographic evidence of the person violating the noise law.² Under the law, the Director has the discretion on whether to proceed with a penalty or citation against the violator.

On July 24, the Transportation and Environment Committee discussed and deliberated Bill 19-25, Noise Control – Leaf Removal Equipment – Seasonal Exemption.³ During its deliberation of the bill, the Committee raised concerns about the unintended consequences of requiring a photo to accompany a leaf blower noise complaint. Particularly, residents taking photos of workers presented a chilling effect for many landscapers. The Committee’s discussion noted that the requirement of photographic evidence in this political climate was not ideal and suggested that the law should be amended.

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) Racial Equity and Social Justice Statement for Bill 19-25 explained that:

“A 2011 study commissioned by the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce found that, nationally, compared to their share of business ownership across all sectors, Latinx-owned business were overrepresented in the landscaping industry. More recent local data suggests Latinx-owned businesses may also be overrepresented in the County’s landscaping industry. As shown in Table A (Appendix) Latinx-owned employer businesses in the County are overrepresented in the Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services industry that includes landscaping businesses. Notably, White-owned businesses are also overrepresented in this industry.” *Worksession Staff Report, Page 10*.

Many landscapers who are Hispanic would be disproportionately impacted by the current enforcement requirement. The original intent of the enforcement process was to produce evidentiary proof that, if the County decided to pursue legal remedies in Court, it would not have to rely solely on witness testimony. Instead, the enforcement process has presented a chilling effect that has led to job instability for many landscaping employees. Expedited Bill 30-25 seeks to address the concerns and the unintended consequences raised by the Committee.

Jurisdictions with a single-complaint process

The District of Columbia, the City of Annapolis, and several jurisdictions in California do not require a photo to accompany a complaint, and a single witness may raise a complaint.

BILL SPECIFICS

Expedited Bill 30-25 would repeal the existing enforcement procedure under Section 31B-9(j), which would remove the photo requirement and allow a complaint by at least one witness. This differs from other noise complaints in the County that require at least two witnesses before a complaint may be filed under Section 31B-12 of the County Code. This bill is expedited, meaning it will become effective on the day the Council enacts it.

² Section 31B-9(j) of the Montgomery County Code.

³ The TE Committee voted (2–1) against recommending enactment of Expedited Bill 19-25. See Committee Worksession staff report: [Montgomery County Council - Legislative Information Management System – bill details](#)

SUMMARY OF IMPACT STATEMENTS

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates that Expedited Bill 30-25 would have an insignificant impact on economic conditions in the County, as measured by the Council's priority economic indicators. © 5.

For the Climate Assessment, OLO does not anticipate the Bill will have an impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change.

<u>This packet contains:</u>	<u>Circle #</u>
Expedited Bill 30-25	1
Economic Impact Statement	5
Climate Assessment	8

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*The Racial Equity & Social Justice Impact Statement was not available at the time of publication of this staff report. It can be found at the below address when available: [Racial Equity and Social Justice, Economic, and Climate Impact Statements - Office of Legislative Oversight- Montgomery County, Maryland \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](#)

Expedited Bill No. 30-25
Concerning: Noise Control – Leaf
Removal Equipment – Enforcement
Procedures
Revised: 9/22/2025 Draft No. 1
Introduced: 9/30/2025
Expires: _____
Enacted: _____
Executive: _____
Effective: _____
Sunset Date: _____
Ch. [#], Laws of Mont. Co. [year]

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lead Sponsors: Councilmember Glass, Council President Stewart, and
Councilmembers Balcombe and Albornoz
Co-Sponsors: Luedtke, Katz, Sayles, Fani-González, and Friedson

AN EXPEDITED ACT to:

- (1) modify enforcement procedures by repealing the requirement for photographic evidence in complaints of gas-powered leaf blower use;
- (2) clarify that a single complaint may initiate enforcement of the gas-powered leaf blower ban; and
- (3) generally, amend the law regarding noise control.

By amending

Montgomery County Code
Chapter 31B, Noise Control
Sections 31B-2, 31B-9, and 31B-12

Boldface	<i>Heading or defined term.</i>
<u>Underlining</u>	<i>Added to existing law by original bill.</i>
[Single boldface brackets]	<i>Deleted from existing law by original bill.</i>
<u>Double underlining</u>	<i>Added by amendment.</i>
[[Double boldface brackets]]	<i>Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.</i>
* * *	<i>Existing law unaffected by bill.</i>

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:

Sec. 1. Sections 31B-2, 31B-9, and 31B-12 are amended as follows:

31B-2. Definitions.

* * *

Leaf blower means any portable device designed or intended to blow, vacuum, or move leaves or any other type of unattached debris or material by generating a concentrated stream of air. [Leafblower] Leaf blower includes devices or machines that accept vacuum attachments.

* * *

31B-9. Leaf removal equipment.

- (a) Except as provided in this section, a person must not sell, buy, offer for sale, or use a [leafblower] leaf blower at any time that has an average sound level exceeding 70 dBA at a distance of 50 feet. This requirement is in addition to any other noise level or noise disturbance standard that applies under this Chapter.
- (b) An individual who owns or occupies a residence in a residential noise area may use at the individual's residence a [leafblower] leaf blower bought or manufactured before July 1, 1990, until July 1, 1998, even if it exceeds the standard in subsection (a). After July 1, 1998, a person must not use any [leafblower] leaf blower that violates the standard in subsection (a).
- (c) The Department must apply the standard in subsection (a) in accordance with the most current [leaf-blower] leaf blower testing standard of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).
- (d) The Department may inspect, and [on] at its request a person must produce, any [leafblower] leaf blower that is sold, offered for sale, or used in the County, to determine whether the [leafblower] leaf blower complies with this section. A person who relies in good faith on a

manufacturer's written representation of the sound level of a [leafblower] leaf blower that has not been modified is not subject to a penalty for violating this section.

(e) *Sale of combustion leaf removal equipment – prohibited.* A person must not sell or offer for sale a combustion engine-powered handheld, backpack, or walk-behind leaf blower or leaf vacuum.

(f) *Use of combustion leaf removal equipment – prohibited.* A person must not use a combustion engine-powered handheld, backpack, or walk-behind leaf blower or leaf vacuum.

* * *

(j) *Complaint and enforcement procedures.* An enforcement officer may issue a civil citation under this Section if: [the Director receives a complaint of a noise disturbance supported by photographic evidence of a violation of subsection (f).]

(1) the Director receives a complaint from at least one witness of a noise disturbance in violation of subsection (f); and

(2) the complaint was received by the Director within 7 days of the alleged violation.

31B-12. Enforcement and penalties.

* * *

(f) Except as provided in Section 31B-9(j), an enforcement officer may issue a civil citation for any violation of this Chapter if the enforcement officer:

(1) witnesses the violation; or

(2) receives complaints from at least 2 witnesses of a noise disturbance. Complaints by 2 witnesses are required to issue a citation under paragraph (2), but are not required to prove that a person violated this Chapter.

* * *

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Sec. 2. Expedited Effective Date. The Council declares that this legislation is

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necessary for the immediate protection of the public interest. This Act takes effect on

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the date on which it becomes law.

Economic Impact Statement

Montgomery County, Maryland

Expedited Bill 30-25: Noise Control – Leaf Removal Equipment – Enforcement Procedures

Summary

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates that Expedited Bill 30-25 would have an insignificant impact on economic conditions in the County, as measured by the Council's priority economic indicators. The Bill would repeal the photographic evidence requirement for enforcing the ban on gas-powered leaf blowers in the County. While the repeal could reduce economic costs stemming from job instability among landscaping employees, OLO lacks data to conclude the Bill would achieve this beneficial outcome.

Background and Purpose of Expedited Bill 30-25

In September 2023, the Council passed Bill 18-22, banning the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in the County starting July 1 of this year.¹ The Bill intended to decrease noise pollution and greenhouse gas emissions associated with the use of gas-powered leaf blowers.²

Enforcement of the ban on gas-powered leaf blowers currently requires community members to submit a complaint that includes photographic evidence of the person violating the ban.³ The purpose of Expedited Bill 30-25 is to repeal the photographic evidence requirement and instead allow a complaint on a violation of the ban by at least one witness.⁴

Given their overrepresentation among business owners and employees in the landscaping industry, Latinx community members are disproportionately impacted by enforcement of the gas-powered leaf blower ban.⁵ In July of this year, the Transportation and Environment Committee raised concerns that amid the current political climate – where Latinx community members are being targeted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) –⁶ the photo enforcement requirement could create a chilling effect on landscapers.^{7,8} As noted in the introduction staff report, "Bill 30-25 seeks to address the concerns and unintended consequences raised by the Committee."⁹

The Council introduced Expedited Bill 30-25 on September 30, 2025.

¹ [Action Staff Report for Bill 18-22, Montgomery County Council, Vote on September 26, 2023.](#)

² ["Leaf Blowers," Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection.](#)

³ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 30-25, Montgomery County Council, Introduced September 30, 2025, pg. 1.](#)

⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 2.

⁵ [RESJIS for Expedited Bill 19-25, Office of Legislative Oversight, July 14, 2025, pg. 2.](#)

⁶ [Antonio Planas, "It's about surviving": Hispanic businesses struggle with ICE and the economy," The Banner, October 13, 2025.](#)

⁷ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 30-25, pg. 2.](#)

⁸ [Maryam Shahzad, "Elrich Supports Enforcing Leaf Blower Ban Without Photos," Montgomery County Media, October 9, 2025.](#)

⁹ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 30-25, pg. 2.](#)

Information Sources, Methodologies, and Assumptions

As required by 2-81B of the Montgomery County Code, this Economic Impact Statement evaluates the impacts of Expedited Bill 30-25 on residents and private organizations, using the Council's priority economic indicators as the measure. In doing so, it examines whether the Bill would have a net positive or negative impact on overall economic conditions in the County.¹⁰

One of the current challenges the landscaping industry faces is the Trump administration's mass and indiscriminate arrests and deportations of undocumented immigrants, which is likely exacerbating labor shortages in the industry, especially among seasonal workers.¹¹ Against this backdrop, there may be an unintended "chilling effect" from requiring photographic evidence of violations of the County's gas-powered leaf blower ban, as discussed in the Bill's introduction staff report. Repealing the photographic evidence requirement may reduce economic costs stemming from job instability among landscaping employees. However, OLO lacks data to conclude the Bill would achieve this beneficial outcome.

Variables

Not applicable

Impacts

WORKFORCE ▪ TAXATION POLICY ▪ PROPERTY VALUES ▪ INCOMES ▪ OPERATING COSTS ▪ PRIVATE SECTOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT ▪ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ▪ COMPETITIVENESS

Residents

Not applicable

Businesses, Non-Profits, Other Private Organizations

Not applicable

Net Impact

Not applicable

Discussion Items

Not applicable

¹⁰ Montgomery County Code, "[Sec. 2-81B, Economic Impact Statements](#)."

¹¹ For recent data on U.S. immigration enforcement, see Maanvi Singh et al., "[How Trump Has Supercharged the Immigration Crackdown - in Data](#)," US News, *The Guardian*, July 23, 2025.

Caveats

Two caveats to the economic impact analysis conducted here should be noted. First, predicting the economic impacts of legislation is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, the multitude of causes of economic outcomes, economic shocks, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, the analysis performed here is intended to *inform* the legislative process, not determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the Bill under consideration.

Contributions

Stephen Roblin, PhD (OLO) prepared this report.

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED BILL 30-25: NOISE CONTROL – LEAF REMOVAL EQUIPMENT – ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 30-25 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it is proposing changes to enforcement procedures of the ban on gas-powered leaf blowers.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 30-25

In September 2023, the County Council passed Bill 18-22.¹ This Bill banned the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in the County as of July 1, 2025. Bill 18-22 intended to decrease noise pollution and greenhouse gas emissions associated with the use of gas-powered leaf blowers.²

Currently, to enforce Bill 18-22, community members must submit a complaint that includes photographic evidence of the person violating the ban.³ The purpose of Expedited Bill 30-25 is to repeal this photographic evidence requirement. Instead, Bill 30-25 would allow a complaint on a violation of the ban by at least one witness.⁴

Given their overrepresentation among business owners and employees in the landscaping industry, Latinx community members are disproportionately impacted by enforcement of the gas-powered leaf blower ban.⁵ In July of this year, the Transportation and Environment Committee raised concerns that amid the current political climate – where Latinx community members are being targeted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) –⁶ the photo enforcement requirement could create a chilling effect on landscapers.^{7,8} As noted in the introduction staff report, "Bill 30-25 seeks to address the concerns and unintended consequences raised by the Committee."⁹

The Council introduced Expedited Bill 30-25 on September 30, 2025.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As the Bill proposes changes to the enforcement procedures of the County's ban on gas-powered leaf blowers, OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 30-25 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions, community resilience, and adaptive capacity.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Climate Assessment Act requires OLO to offer recommendations, such as amendments or other measures to mitigate any anticipated negative climate impacts.¹⁰ OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Expedited Bill 30-25 is likely to have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions, community resilience, and adaptive capacity.

CAVEATS

OLO notes two caveats to this climate assessment. First, predicting the impacts of legislation upon climate change is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and the broad, global nature of climate change. Second, the analysis performed here is intended to inform the legislative process, not determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

PURPOSE OF CLIMATE ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of the Climate Assessments is to evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on the County's contribution to addressing climate change. These climate assessments will provide the Council with a more thorough understanding of the potential climate impacts and implications of proposed legislation, at the County level. The scope of the Climate Assessments is limited to the County's contribution to addressing climate change, specifically upon the County's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and how actions suggested by legislation could help improve the County's adaptive capacity to climate change, and therefore, increase community resilience.

While co-benefits such as health and cost savings may be discussed, the focus is on how proposed County bills may impact GHG emissions and community resilience.

CONTRIBUTIONS

OLO staffer Kaitlyn Simmons drafted this assessment.

¹ [Action Staff Report for Bill 18-22, Montgomery County Council, Vote on September 26, 2023.](#)

² ["Leaf Blowers," Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection.](#)

³ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 30-25, Montgomery County Council, Introduced September 30, 2025, pg. 1.](#)

⁴ Ibid, pg. 2.

⁵ [RESJIS for Expedited Bill 19-25, Office of Legislative Oversight, July 14, 2025, pg. 2.](#)

⁶ [Antonio Planas, "It's about surviving': Hispanic businesses struggle with ICE and the economy," The Banner, October 13, 2025.](#)

⁷ Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 30-25, pg. 2.

⁸ [Maryam Shahzad, "Elrich Supports Enforcing Leaf Blower Ban Without Photos," Montgomery County Media, October 9, 2025.](#)

⁹ Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 30-25, pg. 2.

¹⁰ Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022