



City of Miami Climate Resilience Committee Legislation

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Resolution:

File Number:

Final Action Date:

A RESOLUTION OF THE MIAMI CLIMATE RESILIENCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDING TO THE MIAMI CITY COMMISSION TO DIRECT THE CITY MANAGER TO TRANSITION TO NON-GAS POWERED LEAF BLOWERS FOR ALL CITY LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS, TO REQUEST ALL CURRENT CITY LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE CONTRACTORS TO VOLUNTARILY COMPLY FOR THE DURATION OF THEIR CONTRACTS, TO REQUIRE NON-GAS POWERED LEAF BLOWERS IN ALL FUTURE BIDS FOR CITY LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE WORK, TO ISSUE A POLICY WITH A TRANSITION PERIOD TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF GAS POWERED LEAF BLOWERS WITHIN THE CITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, climate change currently affects the City of Miami (City) residents, businesses, and visitors in numerous ways, and both adapting to and mitigating the effects is a priority; and

WHEREAS, a leaf blower is a widely available gardening tool used to manage leaves, clippings, and other debris; and

WHEREAS, 2-stroke engines are common in gasoline-powered lawn equipment and are inefficient as approximately 30% of the fuel does not complete combustion, releasing several pollutants; and

WHEREAS, phasing out noisy gas-powered leaf blowers has environmental, health, monetary, and quality of life benefits; and

WHEREAS, in January 2020, Mayor Francis Suarez announced a carbon neutrality goal of reaching net zero city-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Since then, the City has released a [greenhouse gas inventory](#); and

WHEREAS, the City of Miami adopted [The Miami Forever Carbon Neutral](#) Plan in November 2021 as a roadmap to Carbon Neutrality by 2050 with actions to reduce emissions, strengthen the local economy, and enhance climate justice, and has an interim goal to cut Citywide greenhouse gas emissions by 60% from 2018 levels by 2035; and

WHEREAS, the [City of Miami is a signatory of the We Are Still In pledge](#), a promise to uphold the goals set out by the United Nations Paris Climate Agreement at a local level, which includes a goal for emissions reduction equal to or greater than the US goal under the Paris Climate Agreement (26-28% by 2025); and

WHEREAS, according to data for 2020 from the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#), fossil fuel-powered lawn equipment emitted more than 30 million tons of carbon dioxide, the leading cause of global warming; and

WHEREAS, [testing in 2011](#) by the [vehicle reviewer Edmunds.com](#) compared the emissions of 2-stroke and 4-stroke leaf blowers to a 2011 Ford F-150 found that the leaf blowers emitted approximately seven times or greater oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and 13.5 times or greater carbon monoxide (CO) than the vehicle, generating 23 times CO and nearly 300 times more non-methane hydrocarbons (NMHC) than the Ford F-150; and

WHEREAS, [running a gas-powered leaf blower for one hour emits the same smog-forming emissions as driving a light-duty passenger vehicle from Miami to Baltimore](#), and [running a 2-stroke blower for half that time is the same as driving the Ford F-150 from Texas to Alaska](#); and

WHEREAS, according to [data for 2020 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#), fossil fuel-powered lawn equipment emitted nearly 22,000 tons of fine particulate pollutants, including fine PM2.5 that have been linked to [respiratory ailments, reproductive and mental health issues, and even premature death](#), equal to the amount produced by 234 million typical cars; and

WHEREAS, an [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) study](#) found that Gasoline-powered landscape maintenance equipment (GLME; leaf blowers/vacuums, trimmers, edgers, brush cutters) accounted for 43% of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and around 50% of fine Particulate Matter (PM). Two-stroke engines were responsible for the vast majority of fine PM from GLME; and

WHEREAS, [workers using commercial equipment are exposed](#) to high levels of VOCs and fine PM when they are close to the emitting sources, made worse when they operate the equipment several hours each day and several days a week in seasons of use; and

WHEREAS, other members of the public, including [children, may also be exposed to high levels of emissions](#) from commercial landscape maintenance equipment (GLME) used routinely around residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, and other public spaces; and

WHEREAS, '[Valuing Quiet: An economic assessment of US environmental noise as a cardiovascular health hazard](#)' published in the National Library of Medicine, states that environmental noise pollution increases the risk for hearing loss, stress, sleep disruption, annoyance, cardiovascular disease, and has other adverse health impacts. The analyses suggest that a 5 Decibel noise reduction scenario would reduce the prevalence of hypertension by 1.4% and coronary heart disease by 1.8%, with an annual economic benefit estimated at \$3.9 billion; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization recommends a general outdoor noise level of 55 decibels, but [the more than 11 million gas-powered leaf blowers that operate in the U.S.](#) and Commercial grade gas-powered leaf blowers emit noise orders of magnitude higher than levels deemed safe [and which can travel long distances](#) and be heard within buildings due to the [low-frequencies](#) that differentiate them from battery-powered leaf blower noise; and

WHEREAS, due to the many benefits, cities and towns across the U.S., [including neighboring Miami Beach](#) and [Key Biscayne](#), have [enacted regulations and bans on gas-powered leaf blowers](#); and

WHEREAS, many comparable alternatives exist, including plug-in or battery-operated leaf blowers and non-motorized tools such as rakes and brooms; and

WHEREAS, a transition period will provide a reasonable phase-in period during which City staff can conduct outreach to inform and educate residents and landscape maintenance companies about the provisions and benefits of this Resolution and related best practices.; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Resilience Committee finds that it is in the best interest of the City and its residents to recommend to the City Commission that it direct the City Manager to transition to non-gas powered leaf blowers for all City Landscape maintenance operations, as more particularly described herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CLIMATE RESILIENCE COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF MIAMI, FLORIDA:

Section 1. The recitals and findings contained in the Preamble to this Resolution are adopted by reference and incorporated as if fully set forth in this Section.

Section 2. The Climate Resilience Committee strongly supports actions to reduce emissions, improve air quality, reduce unnecessary noise, and improve health.

Section 3. The Climate Resilience Committee hereby recommends to the City Commission that it direct the City Manager to transition to non-gas powered leaf blowers for all City landscape maintenance operations, to request all current City landscape maintenance contractors to voluntarily comply for the duration of their contracts, to require non-gas powered leaf blowers in all future bids for City landscape maintenance work, and to issue a policy with a transition period to prohibit the use of gas-powered leaf blowers within the City.

Section 4. The Secretary of the Climate Resilience Committee is directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to the Mayor and City Commissioners.

Section 5. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.