



July 18, 2022

San Rafael City Council
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

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415.457.7656

RE: Ban on Leaf Blowers and other Off Road Engines

Honorable Mayor and Council Members,

Sustainable San Rafael fully supports banning gasoline powered leaf blowers in San Rafael starting this October, both to reduce GHG emissions and to improve air quality for workers and residents. We ask that you consider the following recommendations regarding the city's ordinance:

First, we support the city providing an additional rebate for San Rafael landscape maintenance firms beyond that provided by the state, in order to assist in the transition to electric equipment. This could be limited to small landscape firms headquartered in San Rafael, benefiting local low-income workers who suffer disproportionately from poor air quality and climate change impacts in general. Like other Marin jurisdictions, the city or a third party, could collect and dispose of the gas-powered equipment before the rebate is given, to assure proper disposal of the old equipment.

Moreover, since the state's program and the city's 2021-22 Climate Change Action Plan priorities address not only leaf blowers but other small off-road engines, we urge the city to move forward now to ban all gas-powered gardening equipment as soon as possible. This would speed up GHG and other emissions reductions, which could benefit everyone's health and reduce our community's carbon footprint by as much as one percent. Why not bite the bullet now, with state funding available and state restrictions commencing in 2024?

Finally, we note that leaves are a beneficial part of our ecosystem. We need to encourage property owners to rake leaves and place them in their green carts for composting, rather than endlessly blowing these organics from one place to another, causing further health issues due to the dust created and the noise pollution. It could be beneficial to partner with Marin Sanitary to help communicate this message to residents, along with other city channels.

Thanks again for your forward-thinking sustainability work.

Sincerely,

Annika Osborn,
SSR Emissions Reduction Task Force