



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

## Krueger and Otis Re-Introduce Bill To Create Electric Landscaping Equipment Rebate Program

LIZ KRUEGER March 21, 2023

| ISSUE: [CLIMATE CHANGE](#), [AIR POLLUTION](#), [NOISE POLLUTION](#), [LEAF BLOWERS](#)



**Albany** – Today, State Senator Liz Krueger and Assemblymember Steve Otis, announced the re-introduction of a bill (S.5853/A.5681) to create a rebate program for the purchase of electric landscaping equipment. A similar bill, carried by Senator Krueger and former Assemblymember Steve Englebright, overwhelmingly passed the Legislature last April, but was **vetoed by Governor Hochul** in December. The new bill gives more discretion to NYSERDA in creating the rebate program.

"Addressing the climate crisis requires action on all fronts," said **Senator Krueger**. "Gas-powered landscaping equipment emits a stunning amount of greenhouse gases and co-pollutants, not to mention the noise that blights communities across the state. This bill will make it easier for New York's landscaping companies to transition to cleaner, quieter equipment. It's a win for small businesses, workers, communities, and our shared environment."

"The state and federal governments are both providing incentives to encourage the transition to clean energy equipment, appliances, cars and buses," said **Assemblyman Otis**.

"The program proposed in our legislation will help fund the purchase of electric landscaping equipment through a rebate program that will lower the cost to landscape businesses and encourage the use of cleaner, quieter lawn-care machinery."

Gas-powered landscaping equipment has a significant negative impact on workers, communities, and the environment. Electric equipment, on the other hand, is lighter, quieter, has lower maintenance costs, a significantly smaller environmental footprint, and is better for workers' health. S.5853/A.5681 would create an Electric Landscaping Equipment Rebate Program, administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). It would offer point-of-sale rebates to commercial landscapers and institutional users, including municipalities, who purchase battery-powered electric landscaping equipment, such as leaf blowers, weed whackers, or lawn mowers.

Gas-powered landscaping equipment emits large amounts of greenhouse gases and harmful, smog-forming pollution, including hydrocarbons, oxides of nitrogen (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), and fine particulate matter (PM). The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has reported that operating a gas-powered lawn mower for one hour creates as much smog-forming pollution as driving an average car 300 miles, the distance from New York City to

Portland, ME. Operating a gas-powered leaf blower for one hour creates as much smog-forming pollution as driving a car 1,100 miles, or from New York City to Tampa, FL. According to CARB, early in this decade the total smog-forming emissions from small off-road engines, the vast majority of which are residential and commercial lawn and garden equipment, will exceed those from passenger cars in the Greater Los Angeles Area.

Noise is also a significant negative impact from gas-powered lawn care equipment. According to a 2018 report in the *Journal of Environmental and Toxicological Studies*, sound levels at distances of 100 to 400 feet were up to 22 decibels louder for gas-powered leaf blowers than their battery-electric equivalents (the decibel scale is logarithmic, so each increase of 10 represents a noise ten times louder). The report goes on to say, "the routine use of multiple [gas-powered leaf blowers] and other noisy equipment for hours a day exposes not only workers but large numbers of people in the community to harmful levels of noise and threatens not only worker health, but public health, particularly of children, seniors, and other vulnerable populations."

As of 2018, 170 communities in the US had enacted restrictions on the use of gas-powered leaf blowers. In New York State, more than fifty cities, towns, and villages have bans or other restrictions on gas-powered leaf blowers during certain times of year.

In an effort to address concerns expressed by the Governor's office that led to the veto of the previous version, the sponsors have made changes to the bill to give more discretion to NYSERDA in determining the shape of the program, and have limited eligibility for the rebate to professional landscapers and institutional users.

**Patrick McClellan, Policy Director for the New York League of Conservation Voters**, said: "If New York is to achieve its goal of 100 percent clean energy by 2040--that's in just 17 years--the state

must move away from fossil fuels in every sector of the economy, including landscaping equipment. By switching to electric landscaping equipment with the help of rebates, New Yorkers will not only save money, they will be healthier as we reduce air pollution and get one step closer to zero emissions. We thank Senator Krueger and Assemblymember Otis for introducing this bill and we look forward to working with the state legislature to get it passed."

**Rich Schrader, New York Legislative and Policy Director for NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council)**, said: "The Electric Landscaping Equipment Rebate Program will help landscapers and homeowners transition away from gas-powered lawn care equipment to far less polluting, far less noisy electrical equipment. Not only do lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and hedge trimmers contribute to climate change, but they also create air pollution by releasing nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and carbon monoxide. Ultimately, the Rebate Program will benefit all New Yorkers by creating cleaner, quieter communities."

**Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director, Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE)**, said: "When we are mowing our lawns and maintaining our backyards, we want the smell of fresh cut grass not noxious air pollution. Gas-powered lawn equipment contribute to climate change, damage air quality, and create unnecessary noise pollution in neighborhoods across New York. This legislation creates a rebate program which incentivizes the transition to cleaner, environmentally friendly electric landscaping equipment. CCE applauds Senator Krueger and Assemblymember Otis for their leadership and urges the legislature to pass this bill."

**Conor Bambrick, Director of Policy for Environmental Advocates NY**, said: "Little engines cause big problems. Gas-powered landscaping equipment, such as lawn mowers and leaf blowers have a large carbon footprint, impact air quality, and threaten the health and well-being of

individuals operating the equipment. If New York is to meet its climate goals, we need to make sure we retire every fossil fuel powered tool. The legislation introduced by Senator Krueger and Assemblymember Otis will help to drive that change."

**Roger Downs, Conservation Director, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter**, said: "Nothing can ruin time off at home like the loud din of neighborhood leaf blowers and lawnmowers. While the noise is irritating, these loud, gas powered landscaping tools are also tremendously polluting and a significant contributor to asthma and other pulmonary diseases. By creating an incentive program to put emissions-free lawn equipment in every New Yorker's hands, Senator Krueger and Assembly Member Otis are leading the charge to protect air quality and restore peace and quiet to our neighborhoods through innovative solutions."

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2023-S5853**

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Establishes the electric landscaping equipment rebate program; provides for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof

March 20, 2023

Assembly Floor Calendar

Sponsored by [Liz Krueger](#)

Do you support this bill?