



**Senate Bill No. 319**

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF BATTERY-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS AND SIMILAR  
EQUIPMENT BY THE STATE AND MUNICIPALITIES**

**Joint Testimony of the Department of Administrative Services, Department of Energy and  
Environmental Protection, and Department of Transportation**

**Environment Committee**

**March 4, 2026**

Senator Lopes, Representative Parker, Senator Harding, Representative Callahan, and distinguished members of the Environment Committee. The Department of Administrative Services (DAS), the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and the Department of Transportation (CTDOT) appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on [Senate Bill 319](#): An Act Concerning the Use of Battery-Powered Leaf Blowers and Similar Equipment by the State and Municipalities. This bill would prohibit the use of gas-powered leaf blowers on all state property and require DAS, DEEP, and CTDOT to replace lawn mowers, lawn trimmers, and leaf blowers with electric hand-held or push alternatives as the existing equipment expires. The bill would also permanently establish the Lawn and Garden Equipment Exchange Fund (LEEF) which was a 2010 pilot program, while shifting funding responsibility to electric ratepayers. In addition, the bill would allow for a systems benefit charge for the electrification of lawn equipment and authorize the Connecticut Green Bank to fund the transition to electric leaf blowers, with funding drawn from unspecified programs. Finally, the bill would impose a statewide ban on both the sale of gasoline-powered leaf blowers beginning in 2029 and a prohibition on their use beginning in 2030.

Our agencies appreciate the intent of this bill, as all state agencies continue to incorporate sustainability practices into their core missions in accordance with state statutes and Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 21-3. At the same time, it is important to recognize that leaf blowers account for approximately 0.01 percent of Connecticut's nitrogen oxides emissions inventory, which contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog).

The bill would, however, impose ongoing costs on the state and on electric ratepayers in the public benefits charge during a time when affordability is a paramount concern for this Administration, the legislature, and the residents of Connecticut. The proposal does not specify the entities eligible to receive the ratepayer-supported funding for the electrification of lawn equipment, nor does it contain a cap or other fiscal parameters for the use of such funds.

In addition, replacing all state-owned and contractor-operated leaf blowers with battery-powered equipment and the necessary associated infrastructure would result in both upfront capital costs and ongoing operational expenses across multiple state agencies. Costs are not currently reflected in the state budget and would require further evaluation. While critical exceptions are made relative to state replacement, the bill is currently silent on the availability of functional equivalencies.

Regarding specific agency concerns, DAS is concerned about the potential impact this legislation may have on businesses that contract with the state. Many of our contracted landscapers are small businesses that, like the state, face costs to acquire new equipment. As a result, they may be hesitant to continue offering certain services, which could lead to a decrease in the number of businesses available to bid on state contracts. Those vendors that are able to continue providing services would pass onto the State their additional costs in the form of increased contract costs. As with other state agencies, CTDOT is a 24/7 operation that requires equipment and supplies to be available at a moment's notice, including in excess of 100 leaf blowers stationed across the various maintenance garages. CTDOT utilizes leaf blowers in a variety of applications within its ongoing maintenance activities, construction projects, emergency response, and snow removal operations. Leaf blowers serve a key part of the "clean up" activities that keep critical infrastructure free of debris and precipitation, and roadways safe for use by the traveling public. With short battery life, lengthy recharging times, and no power supplies at most locations CTDOT staff respond to, gas-powered leaf blowers are the only feasible tool available for CTDOT's agency use today.

As recent storms have demonstrated, CTDOT's current ability to respond to weather events is excellent. Such performance is predicated on availability of staff and sufficiency of equipment to meet operational requirements. Critically, winter operations pose a significant operational difficulty for battery powered equipment. Cold weather and heavy use drain batteries at an accelerated rate and CTDOT will not have the ability to recharge batteries in field operations whereas refueling is currently feasible and timely.

Limiting CTDOT's ability to respond can significantly impact roadway safety.

We are happy to continue discussions with the bill's proponents, but we respectfully urge the Committee to oppose the bill as drafted for the above reasons.