

# Turfgrass Advocacy 2023

New York State Turfgrass Association



## Gas to Electric Equipment Transition in New York

### Background

In New York and other states around the country there has been legislation proposed that would ban the use of gas-powered small engine equipment and would require the use of electric equipment as an alternative. S02132/A02133 (Liu/Dinowitz) would prohibit the use of gas-powered leaf and lawn blowers from May 1<sup>st</sup>-September 30<sup>th</sup>, beginning May 1, 2025. A705 (Carroll) proposes to ban the sale of gasoline powered leaf blowers and lawn mowers by January 1, 2025. S05390 (Harckham) proposes that one hundred percent of in-state sales of new lawn carer devices shall be zero-emissions by 2029.

The New York State Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act focuses on efforts for meeting renewable energy goals. While the New York State Turfgrass Association (NYSTA) endorses measures NYS legislators are taking to meet renewable energy goals set forth in this act, the cost, performance and infrastructure to support electric commercial lawn and landscape equipment conversions does not make this a viable option at this time.

Numerous decades of gas-powered small engine development have produced an extremely efficient and highly performing line of reliable equipment essential for the productivity and livelihood of both landscape professionals and private homeowners alike. The technological advancements of the products we use today have come through many years of research and millions of dollars of investments in this research and development. Gas-powered small engine landscape equipment is cost effective, light weight, high powered, fuel efficient and highly focused on reduced emissions.

The electric powered equipment industry is in its infancy as a new means of meeting the needs of a long-standing land maintenance industry. Only within the last few years have we seen prototypes and concept-driven design make its way to the market in the commercial landscape industry. This new technology has many challenges that need to be overcome before these pieces of machinery can be reliably used. Some of the challenges that the electric land maintenance equipment industry faces are:

- Cost- the cost is 2-4x greater than gas-powered equipment.
- Performance- battery powered equipment does not run as long as highly developed gas equipment.
- Battery technology- batteries are unable to perform to the standard needed for full day commercial use.
- Transportation, safe storage and mobility of extra batteries.
- Infrastructure upgrades required to charge battery fleets.
- Safety of charging and stored batteries from fire/explosion.

This new alternative/electric equipment industry, although extremely young and underdeveloped in its market share and industry presence has the potential in time to have a positive impact on how the landscape industry does business in NYS. But the resources we have, and the technology are not yet at the point where wide scale adoption can take place.

## Recommendations

Before we can endorse measures to power commercial land maintenance equipment via renewable energy sources there needs to be a vast national and state funding initiative in not only research and development of this new technology but cost reduction incentives for ground maintenance entities. Green Industry professionals in NYS and throughout the country are the stewards of the land they maintain, and the use of renewable energy equipment is a natural evolution in the efforts of environmental stewardship. Electric equipment is a means by which renewable energy goals can be achieved however the transition to such equipment must be met over a timeline adequate to allow for the challenges of this equipment to be overcome. We oppose legislation that would ban or eliminate the use of gas-powered equipment at this time or anytime in the future as this would negatively impact the ability of professionals to accomplish maintenance goals. We endorse the following:

- Federal and State funded research and development of battery technology and electric equipment.
- Cost reduction incentives for transition to electric equipment through tax credit and rebate programs
- Infrastructure transition cost reduction incentives
- Setting performance criteria and cost milestones for electric equipment manufacturers
- Transition timelines over the next decade as performance/cost milestones are met.
- Providing education/funding to state professional associations for awareness and communication to memberships.
- Exemptions for various equipment types that electric power performance/cost goals cannot be met.

A commonsense approach and planned transition to electric powered equipment as a means of achieving renewable energy goals is a win-win for the industry and the State. Now is the time to work together to formulate the right path forward as our needs of environmental conservation continue to elevate in our State and national conversations.