James R. Walkinshaw
Braddock District Supervisor

703-425-9300
9002 Burke Lake Road **Braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov**
Burke, VA 22015 **www.fairfaxcounty.gov/braddock**

Joint Board Matter

Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw
Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay
Supervisor Andres F. Jimenez
Supervisor Dan Storck

April 22, 2025

Air Quality Awareness Week Proclamation

Background:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated May 5 - 9 as *Air Quality Awareness Week* to inform the public of actions they can take to reduce air pollution and other harmful emissions. Our cohorts at Clean Air Partners, who lead education and outreach efforts on air quality in the Baltimore-Washington region, will be kicking off a public education campaign during *Air Quality Awareness Week* to highlight ways residents can fight hidden backyard pollution hazards.

Lawn and gardening activities are a major focus of the campaign as they can have a major impact on local air quality and the climate. The use of gas-powered lawncare equipment can be particularly harmful. A gas-powered leaf blower alone emits nearly 300 times the amount of air pollutants as a pickup truck. The campaign encourages the use of cleaner, more efficient electric lawncare equipment and includes other suggestions for improving local air quality.

Fairfax County is committed to promoting environmentally friendly lawncare practices both within its operations and throughout the community. Our Board Matter of November 2021 directed County agencies to discontinue the use of gas-powered leaf blowers as soon as practical, update procurement processes to incentivize contractors'

use of electric devices, and provide information to County residents about alternatives to gas-powered leaf blowers. The County's Facilities Management Division has been tracking the transition of its gas-powered lawn care tools to electric equipment and reported that by the end of FY24, they had replaced 67% of their gas-powered leaf blowers and string trimmers with electric ones. By the end of this fiscal year, they plan to achieve an 82% level of replacement in those categories. For its part, the Park Authority has also been making the switch. To date, they have exchanged 20% of their gas-powered leaf blowers and 18% of their lawn trimmers for their electric equivalents.

This year, Fairfax County's Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) is teaming up with Clean Air Partners to boost their public education campaign and host a lawncare equipment exchange program. As part of this initiative, residents will have the opportunity to enter a raffle for electric lawn equipment or trade in and recycle their gas-powered lawn equipment, such as mowers, leaf blowers, or string trimmers, for electric alternatives.

Residents must register in advance for the exchange, either by visiting the website **cleanairpartners.net/exchange** or by signing up at the Reston Farmers Market on Saturday, May 17, or at the Lorton Farmers Market on Sunday, May 18. The exchange and recycling events will take place at participating ACE Hardware store locations on May 24 - 25 and June 7 - 8. The County's goal is to provide roughly 220 electric lawncare tools by the end of the exchange period.

In addition, attendees at the Ace Hardware event on May 24 will have the opportunity to visit Clean Air Partners' Backyard Bubble exhibit, which will demonstrate the harmful impacts of lawn and gardening activities on air quality. This Backyard Bubble exhibit will also be featured at the Healthy Together Fairfax event in Franconia Park on June 8 where Clean Air Partners and OEEC will hold a raffle for electric equipment giveaways.

During *Air Quality Awareness Week* and beyond, Fairfax County will encourage residents to do their part to improve air quality by transitioning away from gas-powered lawncare equipment and by taking other actions to reduce air pollution.

Motion:

Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board of Supervisors direct the Office of Public Affairs to draft a proclamation designating May 5 – 9, 2025 as **Air Quality Awareness Week** in Fairfax County, for presentation at the Clean Air Partners' Lawn Equipment Exchange event at Ace Hardware on May 24, and to publicize the Clean Air Partners Lawncare Equipment Exchange Program in cooperation with the OEEC.