



## MYRNA MELGAR

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, March 1, 2022

Contact: Megan Imperial, (415) 972 – 9792, [megan.imperial@sfgov.org](mailto:megan.imperial@sfgov.org)

### \*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*

## **SUPERVISOR MYRNA MELGAR INTRODUCES THE HEALTHIER, CLEANER, QUIETER COMMUNITIES ACT**

*San Francisco to ban gas-powered yard and landscaping equipment and establish transition fund to support workers and protect our environment*

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**— Supervisor Melgar introduced the “Healthier, Cleaner, Quieter Communities Act” today to prohibit the use of gas-powered landscaping equipment in San Francisco and to support the transition to clean-powered electric equipment. Gas-powered equipment is a major source of pollution that disproportionately affects the health of workers and communities of color. If passed, this legislation would arguably be the strictest and most robust in California and in the nation.

Workers using gas-powered tools are uniquely exposed and suffer lung and heart ailments from constant exposure. This legislation seeks to alleviate the environmental injustice that exposes the mostly immigrant landscaping workforce to disease, and the costs borne by their families and communities. According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), pollution from using a gas-powered leaf blower for 1 hour equals pollution from driving a car 1,100 miles - the distance from Los Angeles to Denver. The prohibition of gas-powered equipment also aligns with the [City’s Climate Action Plan Goals](#), which identified commitments to phase out sources of pollution, and where possible, replace them with cleaner alternatives. The last seven years have been the hottest on record.

“San Francisco is tackling this issue through an environmental justice lens,” said Supervisor Myrna Melgar of District 7. “Protecting our mainly Latino and Chinese immigrant landscaping workforce is imperative to successfully protect our environment and have a just transition, centering our vulnerable communities in these conversations. I am excited that the Department of Environment will be leading this initiative.”

If passed, the Healthier, Cleaner, Quieter Communities Act would first phase out the use of gas-powered landscaping equipment by the City and its contractors starting on January 1, 2024. The prohibition for the general public would not begin until January 1, 2026. The legislation will also establish a Fund to support the transition to electric-powered alternatives, which will include wholesale purchasing of equipment for City departments, a small engine gas-powered buyback program for landscapers, and support for the disposal of old equipment.

“Ending the use of gas-powered equipment like leaf blowers is about more than carbon emissions. Operating gas-powered equipment impacts the laborers using them all day and

creates a never-ending nuisance for neighborhoods,” said Debbie Raphael, Director of the San Francisco Department of the Environment. “We now have clean, sustainable alternatives. I applaud Supervisor Melgar for approaching this issue with a keen eye on equity and working holistically with City departments and the community to provide the resources necessary to help landscapers and other contractors make the switch.”

Supervisor Connie Chan of District 1 said, "I'm excited to support Supervisor Melgar's legislation to phase out small gas-powered equipment. These types of equipment impact our community and contribute to air and noise pollution. It is time we clean up this pollution on our streets and look to cleaner alternatives."

"Landscapers who use gas-powered machines put their health on the line every day, risking long-term effects to their heart and lungs. This policy takes a step forward towards protecting workers' health, reducing the carbon footprint, and improving the quality of the air we breathe," stated Charlie Sciammas, Community Organizer with People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Justice (PODER) a grassroots organization working to create people-powered solutions facing low-income Latino immigrants and other communities of color in San Francisco.

"Sunrise SF Youth is excited for Supervisor Melgar's Community Act to ban gas-powered small engines. We look to it as the first of many steps we must take, as a society, to combat the damage created by the fossil fuel industry and mitigate the effects of climate change. We look forward to working with Supervisor Melgar and thank her for being a leader in the fight for a healthy future for the youth of San Francisco," said Natalie Greene, the SOTA Sunrise hub coordinator and member of the Sunrise SF Youth leadership team.

“Gas-powered lawn equipment is a huge loophole in our pollution control laws. This legislation is a vital step in fighting climate change,” said John Rizzo, Political Chair, Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter.

“The San Francisco Climate Emergency Coalition (SFCEC) fully supports the Healthier, Cleaner, Quieter Communities Act, which will be a powerful tool to help our city achieve cleaner air and a healthier environment. The Act's focus on helping those workers, small businesses, and communities most affected by polluting gas-powered equipment is key to successful and just environmental action for San Francisco.”

The Department of Environment will annually certify commercially available small-engines that are clean alternatives to dirty polluting gas-powered landscaping and yard equipment. This is a phased-in approach that is meant to ban all small engine gas-powered landscaping equipment to apply market pressure and support the landscaping workforce. For more information or to sign up to support please contact Megan Imperial at [Megan.Imperial@sfgov.org](mailto:Megan.Imperial@sfgov.org).

###