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April 8, 2024

Committee on Environment, Climate, and Legacy

Chair: Sen. Founj Hawj

Minnesota Senate

Chair Hawj and Committee Members:

The American Lung Association supports measures to reduce the air pollution impacts of combustion-based, fossil fuel-powered lawn mowers, leaf blowers and other small equipment, which contribute a significant share of the air pollution burden in parts of the U.S. This includes supporting the transition to electric small equipment.

Air pollutants, such as fine particulate matter and ozone smog, can have health impacts on anyone who breathes them, with some communities experiencing disproportionately high impacts in our state. In their Life and Breath Report¹, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) calculated that 10 percent of deaths in the Twin Cities in 2015 were related to air pollution, as well as 500 emergency room visits for lung and heart problems. Similar percentages of premature death were seen in Rochester, Duluth, and Saint Cloud. The highest rates of death and disease related to air pollution were in communities with greater percentages of low-income residents, uninsured residents, residents of color, and residents living with a disability.

According to the MPCA, lawn and landscape equipment emitted 2.3 million pounds of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and 780,000 pounds of fine particulate matter² (PM_{2.5}) statewide in 2020. Given the nature and location of these emissions, exposure to this pollution is often from neighborhood sources and by those working with the equipment.

Engaging with communities who are most overburdened by these air pollutants to design and implement an emissions reduction program, as done with SF 4969, is an innovative way to maximize efficiency and target the benefits where they will be most impactful.

Thank you for your consideration of this important topic and your efforts to improve and protect the health of Minnesotans.

Sincerely,



Jon Hunter

Senior Director, Clean Air

¹ https://data.web.health.state.mn.us/web/mndata/life_and_breath

² <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/mpca.data.services/viz/Statewideairemissionsdata/Emissions>