

From: [Tyler Cohen](#)
To: [HEE Exhibits](#)
Cc: [Michael Hall](#)
Subject: HB 3350 Written Testimony
Date: Monday, June 17, 2019 10:53:03 PM

Dear Legislators,

My name is Tyler Cohen, and I am writing to you regarding HB 3350. I was born in Oregon in 1993 and have lived most of my life in the state. In November, I returned home to Oregon after completing a Fulbright fellowship in southern Thailand, where I taught English at an elementary school. My daily walk between school and my apartment involved a bridge above a highway. During this portion of the walk, I wore a mask hoping to minimize the amount of fumes I breathed from motorcycles and trucks passing below. The fumes made me nauseous, and I heard plenty of horrific stories of lung cancer caused by the emissions of these gas-powered machines.

When I reflect upon walking to and from elementary school in Lake Oswego, Oregon, I can easily notice some jarring similarities to my walk to school as a Fulbright teacher in Thailand. While Lake Oswego does not have a single pickup truck stacked fifteen feet high with freshly harvested lemongrass or bananas like you typically would see on Pho Sadet, the highway near my school, my childhood walk to Oak Creek Elementary involved encounters with similar toxic fumes as those wafting above Pho Sadet. Those fumes were from leaf blowers. In Lake Oswego, I would see neighbors blowing leaves into a corner of their yard, landscapers manicuring other yards, and contractors, hired by the city, blowing leaves and dust around the sidewalk. I remember pulling my shirt above my nose and mouth, and trying my best to cover both ears at the same time because of the terribly loud noise that leaf blowers make. I remember not wanting to be rude to the landscaper, but needing to try protecting myself from the deafening roar and horrible fumes spewing from the leaf blowers. Over the years between then and now, the amount of leaf blowers I see has dramatically increased.

While leaf blowers pose an immediate threat to my comfort, health, and safety, they also play into a much larger existential problem that all of humanity faces-- climate catastrophe. After reading Drawdown, I realized wholeheartedly that no single solution will prevent climate catastrophe. The only hopeful way to approach this behemoth of a challenge is to embrace the reality that if we are going to prevent the earth's temperature from rising to and beyond dangerous levels, we will have to solve each and every problem surrounding the multitude of ways societies currently release greenhouse gasses into the air. Emissions from gas powered leaf blowers are more significant than one might assume. HB 3350 plays an integral role in the larger picture of reducing the amount to which humans warm the globe with greenhouse gas emissions.

Finally, a key feature of HB 3350 is that it becomes enacted in 2023. This allows enough time for landscaping contractors, private individuals, and facilities workers at larger institutions, and anybody else feeling the urge to move some leaves to all plan around this required change of equipment. Electric leaf blowers are cheaper to run than gas-powered leaf blowers because they require less maintenance and you do not need to feed gas to an electric blower. It is important not to set anyone at a disadvantage when creating new laws, and this bill will help landscape professionals to evolve their service to fit a healthier, happier, and more sustainable society.

I urge you to consider HB 3350 to help Oregonians live better lives, free of the noise, health risks, and pollution tied to these outdated machines.

Sincerely,
-Tyler Cohen