H7495 and S2277: 2025 Battery-Powered Leaf Blower Pilot Rebate and Education Program Summary

H7495/S3377 aims to reduce air and noise pollution from gas-powered leaf blowers and other landscaping equipment by helping landscape professionals adopt zero-emission technology

H7495/S2277 would allocate $300,000 to establish a pilot leaf blower rebate program managed by OER. WIth this program, landscape professionals registered for business in Rhode Island could receive a rebate of up to $1,500 toward the purchase of a battery-powered leaf blower and two extra batteries, by turning in a gas-powered leaf blower.

H7495/S2277 would also allocate $50,000 for OER and DEM to develop education and training for landscape professionals to learn best practices and safe operation with zero-emission landscaping equipment.

Background: Given that **l**andscaping equipment is a significant source of toxic air pollution that is linked to respiratory and heart disease and dementia, and that industry employees bear the biggest impact, this bill is consistent with statewide goals of reducing greenhouse gas emission, advancing environmental justice, and promoting a just transition with green jobs.

- Gas-powered leaf blowers produce high rates of toxic air pollutants, including carbon monoxide, carcinogens, and fine particulates. The California Air Resources Board estimates that operating a gas-powered leaf blower for one hour produces as much smog-forming pollution as driving a car for 1100 miles.
- A recent report by the Public Interest Research Group found that lawn and garden equipment in Rhode Island produced an estimated 72,640 tons of carbon dioxide, 58 tons of fine particulates, and 182 tons of nitrogen oxides in 2020.
- Gas-powered leaf blowers produce excessive noise, commonly from 80 to 115 decibels at the point of origin, which can cause hearing loss in a short amount of time, and contributes to stress and cardiovascular disease. The sound from electric leaf blowers typically ranges from 60-75 decibels.
- The battery technology required for commercial-grade zero-emission leaf blowers is available and many users, both commercial and residential, have already begun to transition to zero-emission equipment. However, upfront costs of electric commercial-grade leaf blowers are significant for many commercial operators.
- The landscaping industry is decarbonizing, a trend which is accelerating as California's AB1346, requiring that all new small off-road engines be zero-emission, goes into effect. This training proposed in this bill will enable industry workers to succeed as the landscape industry transitions away from gas-powered equipment.