

From: McDonnell, Kevin
To: City Clerk
Cc: Barnacle, Brian; Cader-Thompson, Janice; Healy, Mike; Karen Nau; dpocekay@cityofpetaluma.org; Shribbs, John; Steve
Subject: Re: Letter to our Petaluma City Council to Ban Highly Polluting Small Off-Road Engines
Date: Sunday, April 16, 2023 8:12:49 PM

City Clerk,

Please add this letter to public comments for Monday's City Council meeting

Thanks
Kevin McDonnell

From: Barry Bussewitz
Sent: Sunday, April 16, 2023 8:04 PM
To: Beverly Voloshin
Cc: McDonnell, Kevin <kmcdonnell@cityofpetaluma.org>; Barnacle, Brian <bbarnacle@cityofpetaluma.org>; Cader-Thompson, Janice <jcaderthompson@cityofpetaluma.org>; Healy, Mike <mhealy@cityofpetaluma.org>; Karen Nau <knau@cityofpetaluma.org>; Barry Albert Bussewitz; dpocekay@cityofpetaluma.org <dpocekay@cityofpetaluma.org>; Shribbs, John <jshribbs@cityofpetaluma.org>; Steve DeLue; Karen DeLue; Deborah Garber; Ronald Miska; Patti Schofer; Gail Steiner; Sammy Coopersmith
Subject: Re: Letter to our Petaluma City Council to Ban Highly Polluting Small Off-Road Engines

---Warning: Use caution before clicking any attachments THIS EMAIL IS FROM OUTSIDE OUR EMAIL SYSTEM ---
I think the City Clerk must be sent this to put it in the meeting packet Sometimes a Council member might do that, but they have to think of it

Thai you for putting this together It looks good!

barry

On Apr 16, 2023, at 6:21 PM, Beverly R Voloshin wrote:

Dear Members of the City Council,

Please see the appeal below, which I have also attached as a pdf And, please click on the links provided to find out just how heavily polluting these small engines are If you have not already seen these data, you will be shocked

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue

Sincerely,
Beverly Voloshin
for G Street Action

Why We Must Ban Small Off-Road Engines or SOREs, Now!

We know that gas-powered lawn equipment poses a severe danger to our environment and to the well-being, most assuredly, of the professional lawn care community who uses it. Our question to the City Council and to the public in general is how much longer must Petalumans be asked to endure the poisoning of our air, on behalf of making our landscaping beautiful, especially when there is a way to have the beauty but without posing a serious threat to the physical environment and to anyone's personal health?

Health: Safeguarding the health of professional gardeners and the health of the community

Surely, none of us want gardeners to be sickened by the continuous intake into their lungs of the poisonous fumes from gas-powered lawn equipment, so let's end this situation now. What is required to do so?

Our group, G Street action, which works on behalf of realizing public goods that benefit all citizens, has been urging city officials for over two years to ban gas-powered lawn tools. Now, recently a California law, AB 1326, was passed, and it bans, by 2024, the **sale** of small off-road engines (or SOREs) across the state But the new law has a major loophole: it permits SORE owners to repair existing equipment and continue to use it to pollute our air (<https://www.bing.com/search?q=california%20law%20on%20small%20engine%20lawn%20equipment&pc=cosp&tag=C2N1234D010317A316A5D3C6E&form=CONMHP&conlogo=CT3210127>)

To remedy this lapse, we ask that our City Council move immediately to pass an ordinance to ban **both the sale and the use of SOREs by a date it considers reasonable**. Doing so would put Petaluma in line with many California cities which have already passed such an ordinance, including, among others, Sonoma, Belvedere, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, Carmel, Claremont, Los Angeles, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Malibu, San Anselmo, Santa Barbara, Santa Monica, and Tiburon

Environment: Reducing Pollution and Global Warming

Moreover, by pursuing this course of action, we will also take a major step in reducing carbon emissions into our environment, which we must do, starting now. A UN Climate Report recently stated that it is imperative that the nations of the world cut carbon pollution nearly two-thirds by 2035 (*Press Democrat*, March 21, 2023, Seth Borenstein and Frank Jordans). Otherwise, our entire world will be made subject to the ravages of climate catastrophes, such as the 2017 Tubbs Fire, which killed 22 people, destroyed 5,643 structures--half of which were in Santa Rosa--and the cost estimate of the damage done was 1.2 billion dollars. In addition, there were 100 million dollars spent putting out the fire. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tubbs_Fire)

Though it is a first step, a mandate ending all SOREs would be effective in significantly reducing carbon emissions in our cities, thus allowing us to come closer to realizing the goal set forth in the UN Climate Report. And there is good evidence to support this view. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) says that operating a gas leaf blower for an hour leads to the emission of as much smog-based pollution as driving a Toyota Camry for 1100 miles. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2021/10/12/california-newsom-law-equipment-pollution/>) And, Margaret Renkl of the *New York Times* quotes one expert as saying that "hydrocarbon emissions from a half-hour of yard work with the two-stroke leaf blower are about the same as a 3,900-mile drive from Texas to Alaska in a Raptor [a heavy-duty Ford truck]." (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/25/opinion/leaf-blowers-california-emissions.html>)

Actions

We realize that implementation of our proposal will require financial assistance to small landscaping businesses. But the good news is that such assistance is available. The California Air Resources Board has authorized "\$27 million of voucher funds for professional landscape services operated by small businesses or sole proprietors." (<https://californiacore.org/>) This money, when paired with the funds authorized by local governments (in this case by our own City Council), will substantially help businesses make the transition away from SOREs.

Finally, banning SOREs is certainly among the easiest things we can do to contribute to the City Council's commitment, noted in its "Five Main Goals," of making possible an "environmental legacy we can be proud of." The City Council hopes to achieve this goal by "reducing and drawing down greenhouse gas emissions and encouraging sustainable development." And, eradicating SOREs, as one approach among many that are out there to achieve this goal, would be the equivalent of picking low hanging fruit off an apple tree.

But consider this: if we cannot even ban through our City Council's action these highly polluting, deadly machines (what we call the easy stuff), is it realistic to expect that we will be able to muster the political will to institute policies that are far more of a challenge to achieve, simply because they require major changes in our way of life? We have in mind such policies as placing solar panels on all rooftops, or a grid system for electrification of our cars, trucks, and buses. And, even harder to do would be getting the big four banks--Bank of America, Chase, Citibank, and Wells Fargo--to cease investing, to the tune of 1.2 trillion dollars since 2016, in fossil fuel programs, and instead, convince them to spend their money on sustainable energy projects. This is the hope of the environmental group Third Act, led by famed climate activist Bill McGibben, but persuading the big four banks to change their investment patterns will be super-difficult, even if it is super-necessary. (*Press Democrat*, March 21, 2023, Mary Callahan).

In sum, if we can't do what is easy, the hard stuff in all likelihood will become well beyond our grasp. And, then we will be at the mercy of events over which we have no control, including massive pressures emanating from the millions of people who become climate refugees seeking to escape starvation.

The UN Report on Climate says: "It is now or never to curb global warming." We best heed the UN's warning by doing all we can--in our own gardens--to eliminate for the benefit of everyone in our city, the peril posed to our collective health by SOREs.

A city that can bar new gas stations from being built should be able to ban gas-powered leaf blowers!

Sincerely,
Steve DeLue
Karen DeLue
Deborah Garber
Ronald Miska
Beverly Voloshin
Barry Bussewitz
Marlene Slutsky
Patti Schofler
Gail Steiner

And endorsed by the Casa Grande High School Environmental Advocacy Club; the contact person is co-president Sammy Coopersmith (coopersmithsammy@gmail.com)

From: Beverly R Voloshin [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, April 17, 2023 12:13 PM

To: Fernandez-Bolt, Daibel <dfernandez-bolt@cityofpetaluma.org>

Cc: McDonnell, Kevin <kmcdonnell@cityofpetaluma.org>; Cader-Thompson, Janice <jcaderthompson@cityofpetaluma.org>; Pocekay, Dennis <dpocekay@cityofpetaluma.org>; Barnacle, Brian <bbarnacle@cityofpetaluma.org>; Healy, Mike <mhealy@cityofpetaluma.org>; Shribbs, John <jshribbs@cityofpetaluma.org>; Karen Nau <knau@cityofpetaluma.org>

Subject: Re: Letter to our Petaluma City Council to Ban Highly Polluting Small Off-Road Engines

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Dear Mayor O'Donnell and Council Members Cader Thompson, Pocekay, Healy, Nau, Barnacle, and Shribbs:

I am delighted to report that since sending you our letter regarding banning the highly polluting gas-oil engines (aka small off-road engines), this appeal has also been endorsed by two key environmental organizations: Climate Action Petaluma and 350 Petaluma.

Would the City Clerk kindly add these to the public record. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Beverly Voloshin

for G Street Action, etc.