

California regulators sign off on phaseout of new gas-powered lawn mowers, leaf blowers



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SACRAMENTO — California regulators voted on Thursday to ban the sale of new gas-powered leaf blowers and lawn mowers starting in 2024 and portable generators by 2028, the latest step in the state's aggressive effort to reduce harmful pollutants and transition toward a carbon-free economy.

The new regulations by the California Air Resources Board require all newly sold small-motor equipment primarily used for landscaping to be zero-emission by the target dates, with some exceptions.

The agency's decision is based in part on the belief that battery technology will improve and zero-emission gear will become more widely available before the requirements kick in — though there will be an annual review to determine whether they are on target and whether regulation needs to be altered or delayed.

The restriction applies to homeowners and commercial landscapers alike, and the ban also includes gas-powered weed trimmers, chainsaws and power washers. The regulation does not ban existing gas-powered equipment, however, which can continue to be used.

Combined, these small gas-powered engines create as much smog-causing pollution in California as light-duty passenger cars. There are approximately 15.4 million small off-road engines in California and they produce about 141 tons of smog-forming emissions per day, according to the agency.