State of California
AIR RESOURCES BOARD

Resolution 00-5

January 27, 2000

Agenda Item No.: 00-1-6

WHEREAS, sections 39600 and 39601 of the Health and Safety Code authorize the Air Resources Board ("ARB" or "Board") to adopt standards, rules and regulations and to do such acts as may be necessary for the proper execution of the powers and duties granted to and imposed upon the Board by law;

WHEREAS, Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 19, Burton (Chapter 35; May 21, 1999) directs the Air Resources Board to prepare and submit a report to the Legislature on or before January 1, 2000, summarizing the potential health and environmental impacts of leaf blowers and including recommendations for alternatives to their use and alternative leaf blower technology, if the ARB determines that alternatives are necessary;

WHEREAS, SCR 19 further states that potential impacts from exhaust, noise and blower dust affect both the operators of leaf blowers and the public at large, and there is no comprehensive review available of existing studies or of the availability and actual use of protective equipment for leaf blowers;

WHEREAS, the ARB reviewed the published literature, contacted experts in government and academia, and notified potentially interested members of the public through mailings, telephone calls, electronic mail, and a web page on the ARB website;

WHEREAS, two public workshops and several small group meetings have been held to further facilitate information sharing and public input, and the report has been made available to the public for review and comment;

WHEREAS, the ARB has compiled sufficient information on the exhaust and noise emissions from leaf blowers, and the health effects of these hazards;

WHEREAS, there is insufficient information on the potential for resuspension of particulate matter by leaf blowers, and insufficient information on the exposure of leaf blower operators or the public to the identified hazards; thus, the health and environmental impacts of leaf blowers on operators or the public could not be conclusively determined;

WHEREAS, the goal of the report, then, is to identify further research questions about the nature of potential health impacts for those exposed to the exhaust emissions, resuspended particulate matter, and noise from leaf blowers in both occupational and non-occupational settings;

WHEREAS, the Board finds that recommendations to the Legislature for alternatives to leaf blowers are premature given the lack of data, but does recommend further research on the health impacts and cost effectiveness of reducing exhaust emissions, particulate matter and noise;

WHEREAS, the Board finds that workers may be exposed to potentially hazardous concentrations of carbon monoxide and particulate matter intermittently throughout the work day, and noise exposures may be high enough that workers are at increased risk of developing hearing loss, but further research is needed on exposures;

WHEREAS, the Board finds that potential noise and particulate matter health impacts on all leaf blower operators, professionals and homeowners, should be reduced by the use of appropriate breathing and hearing protective gear, and that employers should be more vigilant in ensuring their employees wear protective gear;

WHEREAS, the Board finds that quieter leaf blowers would reduce the risk of hearing loss by leaf blower operators and annoyance and stress to the public;

WHEREAS, the Board finds that the two-stroke engines that power the majority of leaf blowers emit substantial quantities of exhaust pollutants and that these emissions should be reduced or eliminated further; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds ultra low or zero exhaust-emitting leaf blowers would reduce public and worker exposure to exhaust emissions and directs staff to explore the potential for technological and regulatory advancement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves the report entitled "A Report to the California Legislature on Potential Health and Environmental Impacts of Leaf Blowers," dated December 15, 1999, including the "Addendum to Appendix H," dated January 25, 2000, and directs the Executive Officer to submit the report to the Legislature as soon as possible.

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of Resolution 00-5, as adopted by the Air Resources Board

Pat Hutchens

Pat Hutchens, Clerk of the Board