
Name of Organization: Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Clean Air Task Force

Type of Organization: Other

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Project Title: Regional Lawnmower Buy-Back

Project Category: Pollution Prevention and Reduction - BNS

Rank by Organization (if applicable): 0

Total Funding Requested (\$): 55,000 **Project Duration:** 0.5 Years

Abstract:

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC), a group of 269 Chicago-area municipalities working together on regional issues, proposes a program to eliminate a persistent source of pollution in the Lake Michigan basin. The project targets lawnmowers, a significant and common contributor to the Chicago region's non-attainment status for ozone. Lawn equipment contributes other pollutants as well, many of which wind up in Lake Michigan via air deposition. Under this program, citizens will be offered a rebate on the purchase of an electric, battery, or non-motorized mower when they turn in their gas powered mower. The events will be held throughout the six county region and we will track the number and type of mowers retired to facilitate emissions reduction calculations.

Geographic Areas Affected by the Project

States:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois | <input type="checkbox"/> New York |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indiana | <input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota | <input type="checkbox"/> Ohio |

Lakes:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Superior | <input type="checkbox"/> Erie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Huron | <input type="checkbox"/> Ontario |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> All Lakes |

Geographic Initiatives:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greater Chicago | <input type="checkbox"/> NE Ohio | <input type="checkbox"/> NW Indiana | <input type="checkbox"/> SE Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> Lake St. Clair |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|

Primary Affected Area of Concern:

Other Affected Areas of Concern:

For Habitat Projects Only:

Primary Affected Biodiversity Investment Area:

Other Affected Biodiversity Investment Areas:

Problem Statement:

Lawnmowers, weed-wackers, edgers, and trimmers are significant contributors to air pollution across the country. Further, as pollution from other sources is decreased, the overall contribution of lawn equipment to air quality degradation will continue to increase. Recognizing this, USEPA has issued new standards for lawn equipment and manufacturers have begun producing cleaner burning mowers. Despite this effort, however, it will take many years for all of the older models to be phased out.

The problem is troublesome in the Chicago region for two reasons. First, Chicago is the largest city on the Great Lakes. Therefore, the activities from this region have a substantial effect on the health of Lake Michigan. Lawnmowers contribute a significant amount of NOx, VOCs, and particulate matter to the atmosphere. Many of these pollutants frequently end up in Lake Michigan via air deposition. Therefore, any activities that reduce sources of these pollutants will have beneficial effects on Lake Michigan water quality.

Second, the entire six-county region is currently designated as a severe non-attainment area for ozone under the Federal Clean Air Act. Therefore, the State of Illinois is required to institute programs to improve the region's air quality. In our region, it is estimated that lawn equipment accounts for more than 60 tons of VOCs, 50% of which comes from 2 and 4 cycle gasoline engines.

Proposed Work Outcome:

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Clean Air Task Force proposes a lawnmower buy-back for the Chicago region. The program will directly address the delay in phasing out old lawn equipment by offering an incentive for citizens to retire their gasoline powered lawnmowers. Under the program, the MMC will offer a rebate toward the purchase of a new electric, battery powered, or non-motorized "reel" mower to citizens who retire their gas powered mowers. In addition to the proposed rebate from the MMC, some of the manufacturers are offering additional rebate incentives for their products. Further, the MMC is working with the University of Illinois Extension to help foster the public outreach and education portion of the program.

There are currently plans for five suburban events and two events in the City of Chicago. The buy-back program will be held on 3 or 4 consecutive weekends, with each location's event spanning one weekend. This grant proposes to fund rebates for the suburban locations only, as the Chicago events are already funded.

At the events, staff will track the retired mowers and issue rebates for new electric, battery, or "reel" mowers. Following the buy-back, the retired mowers will be sent to a scrap yard, where we will ensure that they are destroyed. USEPA estimates reductions of 0.14 tons of VOC per day per 1000 lawnmowers retired. The MMC is currently working with USEPA Region V Air Division to develop a protocol for tracking and measuring emission reductions. Additionally, we will modify an existing piece of tracking software under the Cities for Climate Protection Program. The software will be used by Chicago and other communities to track emissions reductions.

Project Milestones:	Dates:
Project Start	11/1999
Initiate Planning Process	11/1999
Finalize Partnerships	02/2000
Begin USEPA/IEPA Workgroup	02/2000
Public Outreach	03/2000
Buy-Back Events	05/2000
Finalize Emissions Reduction Calculation	08/2000
Project End	08/2000

Project Addresses Environmental Justice

If So, Description of How:

Project Addresses Education/Outreach

If So, Description of How:

Outreach will play an important role in the success of the lawnmower buy-back program. We plan to accomplish this through various channels, including newsletters, newspaper articles, newspaper advertisements, and ComEd bill inserts. In addition, the MMC will utilize its relationships with the region's Councils of Government and the University of Illinois Extension. In addition to providing locations for several buy-back events, the University of Illinois Extension will contribute significantly to the education portion of the project. The Extension plans to offer a full range of educational programming at the buy-back locations, including information on native landscaping, composting, and other "green" lawn care and household techniques.

Project Budget:

	Federal Share Requested (\$)	Applicant's Share (\$)
Personnel:	0	10,000
Fringe:	0	0
Travel:	0	0
Equipment:	0	0
Supplies:	0	0
Contracts:	5,000	5,000
Construction:	0	0
Other:	50,000	30,000
Total Direct Costs:	55,000	45,000
Indirect Costs:	0	0
Total:	55,000	45,000
Projected Income:	0	0

Funding by Other Organizations (Names, Amounts, Description of Commitments):

Two lawnmower manufacturers, TORO and Great States/American Lawnmower Company, have agreed to contribute additional discounts on their products to citizens retiring gas powered mowers. The amount of the additional discount is still under discussion.

Description of Collaboration/Community Based Support:

There is a tremendous amount of support for and collaboration on the lawnmower buy-back program. In terms of planning, the following organizations are working with the Metropolitan mayors Caucus: University of Illinois Extension, The City of Chicago Department of Environment, IEPA, and USEPA. For the program itself the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is working with several lawnmower manufacturers, scrap metal dealers, and solid waste agencies.