



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HOUSE BILL 1547

Environment – Synthetic Turf and Turf Infill – Producer Responsibility

February 19, 2020

SUPPORT

MR. CHAIR, MADAM VICE CHAIR, MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE, THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT HB 1547, WHICH CREATES A RESPONSIBLE AND TRANSPARENT SYSTEM FOR REUSING, RECYCLING AND DISPOSING OF ARTIFICIAL TURF PLAYING FIELDS AT THE END OF LIFE.

THE PROBLEM: THERE IS AN UNKNOWN BUT RAPIDLY GROWING NUMBER OF ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELDS IN MARYLAND AND NO RULES OR REGULATIONS FOR DISPOSAL OF A PRODUCT THAT HAS JUST AN EIGHT (8) YEAR AVERAGE LIFE SPAN. THE ARTIFICIAL GRASS, REFERRED TO BY INDUSTRY AS “CARPET,” IS MADE OF PLASTIC AND THE INFILL THAT IS POURED ON TOP OF THE CARPET TO HOLD IT IN PLACE AND PREVENT BUCKLING IS TYPICALLY SHREDDED TIRE. TIRE DISPOSAL IS HIGHLY REGULATED BECAUSE TIRES HAVE CHEMICAL ADDITIVES AND FILLERS INCLUDING CARBON BLACK AND METALS, INCLUDING HIGH CARBON STEEL, AND LEAD.

TO PREVENT INAPPROPRIATE REUSE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY HARMFUL STORAGE OR DISPOSAL OF ARTIFICIAL TURF, THIS LEGISLATION REQUIRES THAT TURF PRODUCERS CREATE STEWARDSHIP PLANS DETAILING HOW THE CARPET AND INFILL WILL BE RECYCLED AND REUSED TO THE “GREATEST EXTENT FEASIBLE.”

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY: REQUIRING INDUSTRY TO SOLVE THE CHALLENGE OF SAFELY RECYCLING, REUSING OR DISPOSING OF THE PRODUCTS IT CREATES IS NOT A NEW CONCEPT. ACCORDING TO THE BOSTON-BASED PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP INSTITUTE, THE EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR) MODEL IS CODIFIED IN 119 LAWS IN 33 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

EPR LAWS COVER DISPOSAL OF A VARIETY OF PRODUCTS FROM APPLIANCES TO AUTOSWITCHES, MATTRESSES TO MEDICAL SHARPS, AND PAINT TO PESTICIDE CONTAINERS.

HB 1547 PROVISIONS: HB 1547 HAS TWO MAJOR COMPONENTS THAT ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AND PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY.

- FIRST, ARTIFICIAL TURF PRODUCERS ARE REQUIRED TO CREATE A STEWARDSHIP PLAN THAT WILL DETAIL HOW ALL OF ITS MARYLAND FIELDS WILL BE REUSED, RECYCLED AND, IF NECESSARY, LANDFILLED. STEWARDSHIP PLANS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT FOR REVIEW, POSTED ONLINE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT, AND EITHER REJECTED OR APPROVED BY THE STATE. THE PLAN ALSO MUST DETAIL HOW THE END OF LIFE PLAN WILL BE FINANCED BY THE PRODUCER. WITHOUT AN APPROVED STEWARDSHIP PLAN FROM MDE, A PRODUCER CANNOT CONTINUE TO SELL ITS ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELDS IN MARYLAND.
- SECONDLY, ARTIFICIAL TURF PRODUCERS MUST PROVIDE TO MDE INFORMATION ABOUT MARYLAND FIELDS THAT WILL BECOME THE BASIS FOR A CHAIN OF CUSTODY TRACKING SYSTEM POSTED ON MDE'S WEB SITE. FOR EACH FIELD ALREADY INSTALLED AND FOR FUTURE FIELDS, PRODUCERS MUST FURNISH MDE WITH INFORMATION REGARDING WHAT COMPANY PRODUCED OR MANUFACTURED THE FIELD, WHO INSTALLED IT, WHO THE USER IS, WHO HAULED IT AWAY AND HOW IT WILL BE REUSED, RECYCLED OR OTHERWISE DISPOSED OF.

THE INDUSTRY, REPRESENTED BY THE SYNTHETIC TURF COUNCIL, WILL SAY THIS LEGISLATION IS NOT NEEDED BECAUSE IT IS ALREADY ENCOURAGING ITS MEMBERS TO ESTABLISH CHAIN OF CUSTODY TRACKING SYSTEMS AND TO BE RESOURCEFUL ABOUT RECYCLING AND REUSING ITS FIELDS. THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH AND IT IS NOT ENFORCEABLE. MARYLAND CAN BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF TACKLING THE GROWING PROBLEM OF ARTIFICIAL TURF DISPOSAL. HB 1547 PROVIDES A WAY FORWARD. I RESPECTFULLY URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT.

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*Turf infill can also be made of granulated tires, rubber, silica sand, Durafill sand, and cork.