

House Bill 1547
Synthetic Turf and Turf Infill – Producer Responsibility
Economic Matters Committee – February 19, 2020
SUPPORT

Chair Davis, Vice Chair Dumais and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of my six grandchildren and especially the four who live in Maryland,



I urge a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 1547 Synthetic Turf and Turf Infill – Producer Responsibility

Let me start with a question. Why do you pass a balanced budget? Many of you simply do not want to pass on debt to the next session or to our children or to our grandchildren. Also, the law requires a balanced budget.

The analogy is not perfect but every new synthetic turf field has a large cost which the producers are hiding from you and from the purchasers. The hidden costs include the cost of disposal of every synthetic turf field when the field is no longer playable, after 6 to 12 years. This is significant because just the plastic rug component of every synthetic turf field is 40,000 pounds of petroleum-based plastic. These plastic rugs cannot be disposed in many municipal landfills and cannot even be burned in many incinerators.

Many new synthetic turf fields are purchased in part or in whole with State taxpayers' funds. **Unless you vote for HB 1547, the hidden, future cost of disposal also will be paid in part by State taxpayers' funds.**

HB 1547 for the first time requires producers to take responsibility for reusing, recycling or safe disposal of a new synthetic turf field. "Take responsibility" cannot be fulfilled by marketing slogans like "100%

recyclable". Rather, the producer needs to provide a stewardship plan for actually reusing, recycling or safely disposing of the synthetic turf field at the end of its life. HB 1547 replaces the hidden costs of disposal with a transparent stewardship plan that is published on the Internet by the Maryland Department of the Environment and approved by that Department.

In brief, **speaking parent to parent, when you vote in favor to HB 1547, you will know that this vote was the right thing to do for your children and grandchildren and it makes good economic sense.** You are not only doing the right thing for Maryland's children but are serving as a role model for State legislators throughout the country.

In addition, HB 1547 provides you an opportunity to strike a blow against environmental injustice. Transparency and sunshine are excellent disinfectants. It is time to end the secrecy of where these synturfs are disposed.

I ask for your support for HB1157 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Respectfully,



Sheldon Fishman
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Silver Spring, MD 20902

"Our members have found many applications for end of life turf that are commonly found in the marketplace, and they are at the forefront of technology that is expanding end of life turf applications," the [Synthetic Turf Council] statement said.

"Where do the millions of square feet of synthetic turf go to die?"

The answer: The same place scrap tires went before – to landfills, to rural and urban stockpiles and "scattered in ravines, deserts, woods, and empty lots," according to a FairWarning investigation. Despite frequent claims by turf manufacturers that synthetic turf fields are recyclable and environmentally friendly, FairWarning found that worn-out playing fields and playgrounds have limited second lives."

<https://www.marylandmatters.org/2019/12/21/fields-of-waste-artificial-turf-becomes-mounting-disposal-mess/>

From: **Joseph Hawkins** <hatmbrown@yahoo.com>

Date: Sun, Oct 27, 2019 at 6:11 AM

Subject: Exposure to lead-bearing synthetic turf (synturf) and poured-in-place (PIP) tire-based playgrounds

To: marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov <marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov>

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing about the disproportionate harm caused to children of color, especially black children, by exposure to lead-bearing synthetic turf (synturf) and poured-in-place (PIP) tire based playgrounds. Please stop the installation of lead into these synturf and PIP 'play' surfaces!

Synturf and PIP are known to contain lead to which children are exposed. As the synturf industry admitted in testimony in 2016, "Yes there is lead in our product." That simple statement has not been amended or retracted in the nearly four years since it was made by the representative of this industry.

Children's exposure to synturf and PIP may be daily, and last for years. Contact is close, frequent and intentional, often in high heat, without disclosure or consent, often at school—which children are legally required to attend. For example, a black child who presents with pre-existing elevated BLL is subjected to harm beyond what other children may experience from the same surfaces and exposure.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concluded years ago that: 1) there is no safe level of exposure to lead; 2) the effects of lead exposure appear to be irreversible; and 3) the best solution is to prevent lead exposure in the first place. Please see the following 2012 CDC publication for details, "Low Level Lead Exposure Harms Children: A Renewed Call for Primary Prevention," Report of the Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning

Prevention, https://www.cdc.gov/ncch/lead/acclpp/final_document_030712.pdf.

As a resident of Maryland and Montgomery County, and as noted above, I would simply like to 'us' stop exposing children to lead. We can accomplish this by: 1) requiring Maryland jurisdictions to test their synturf and PIP surfaces for lead; and 2) if--when--lead is found mandate jurisdictions to remove the lead. These actions will move us a lot further to a place where we are not harming children.

Thank you for your interest in this issue.

Sincerely,

Joseph Hawkins
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