



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

**House Bill 299 - Environment - Synthetic Turf - Chain of Custody
Environment and Transportation Committee – February 15, 2023
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2023 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB0299. The purpose of the bill is to assure that the growing waste-problem from used synthetic turf field carpets and infill is managed transparently and responsibly. House Bill 299 directs the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to implement a tracking system with a chain of custody for each field across its various stages: transportation, installation, removal, reuse, and final disposal.

In the simplest terms, the bill says to the field custodian: *Tell MDE where you got your field, and from whom. If you move it, tell MDE where it went and identify the next custodian.* End of story – no fees, no permits, no approvals. Just point the way to the next link in the chain of custody.

The burdens from this system could not be lower: a one-step, no-cost, online filing, while the benefits of this tracking are significant: ensuring that this growing waste problem is managed transparently, with an eye to protecting human and environmental health.

We know these fields are removed after 7-10 years, but we don't know where they go next. That matters for two reasons: sheer volume and toxic contents.

Volume: Each field amounts to hundreds of tons of bulky, heavy, mixed-plastic waste, all of it unrecyclable anywhere in the US. The Maryland Sierra Club has documented close to 400 synthetic turf fields in just 18 counties; the rest of the state remains uncounted, and the existing list likely omits a significant number, especially fields in private high schools or colleges.

Toxic Contents: The second reason we need HB0299 is that synthetic turf is loaded with a daunting list of toxic components: heavy metals, carcinogens, endocrine disruptors. Recently two more toxins were added to the list: the highly toxic PFAS 'forever chemicals,' and the 6PPD quinone found in all tires. Recent findings identified 6PPD quinone as the cause of the 95% mortality in endangered coho salmon on the US west coast. It seems unlikely that coho salmon are unique in this sensitivity. We won't stop using tires tomorrow, but we can manage where we put 40,000 granulated, highly mobile tires-worth of waste.



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The disposal of used synthetic turf fields must be managed responsibly.

Finally, HB0299 presents an opportunity for sellers to distinguish themselves to buyers by guaranteeing compliance with HB0299, so that parks and schools aren't embarrassed to find their old field is now a neighborhood's contamination and waste problem.

By injecting transparency into the process, HB0299 will secure the verifiable and responsible disposal of each used synthetic turf field that is removed in Maryland.

We ask for your support for HB0299 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Diana E. Conway
WDC President