

HB457 Written Testimony in Support of Synthetic Turf – Chain of Custody

I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 457, “Synthetic Turf – Chain of Custody.” This legislation will require owners of synthetic turf and infill to maintain a chain of custody of its installation, reuse, repurposing, recycling, and ultimate disposal, and to report this information to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for posting on a public website.

Synthetic turf fields produce a large volume of waste, much of it toxic. These systems contain aquatic and human toxins, carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, heavy metals, and immune disruptors, such as PFAS chemicals.

There is no official inventory of the number and location of synthetic turf fields in Maryland or where used fields have gone. The fate of this enormous amount of plastic waste and infill currently is difficult, if not impossible, to track. There is no required documentation of the extent of reuse, repurposing, recycling, or disposal of this waste.

Many waste facilities do not accept synthetic turf waste because of its high volume, weight, and toxicity. It can end up in rural and urban stockpiles and dumped in the environment. When improperly disposed of and uncontained, especially near waterways, these materials pose risks to humans, wildlife, and the environment. Used synthetic turf fields have been illegally dumped or stockpiled in rural areas of neighboring Pennsylvania and Virginia. It is not good that used Maryland synthetic turf fields are dumped in other states or in our own rural areas.

HB457 and the chain of custody it requires will be a first step in addressing this problem. Without public reporting, there is no accountability. A publicly disclosed chain of custody will incentivize responsible disposal.

Please support HB457 and make Maryland a national leader and example for responsible stewardship of synthetic turf throughout its lifetime of use and final disposal.

Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,
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