



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**House Bill 457 - Environment - Synthetic Turf - Chain of Custody  
Environment and Transportation Committee – February 16, 2024  
SUPPORT**

Good afternoon, Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and honorable committee members. The **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** is pleased to submit this testimony in support of HB457. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic clubs in our state with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

**WDC urges the passage of HB457.** This bill assures that the growing waste problem from used synthetic turf fields is managed with care. HB457 directs the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to implement a chain of custody for each field, across its transportation, installation, removal, reuse, and final disposal.

The bill does so by having each field custodian report to MDE where they obtained their field, from whom, and where it was disposed. The bill does not include any fees, permits, or approvals, and only asks the field custodian to report the most recent link in the chain of custody. The reporting burdens to field custodians are minimal: a one-step, no-cost, online filing. And the benefits accrue immediately: this looming waste problem is managed to protect human and environmental health.

We know these fields are typically removed after 8-10 years, but we don't know where and how they are disposed. That matters for two reasons: sheer volume and toxic contents.

Volume: One field represents hundreds of tons of bulky, heavy, mixed-plastic waste that, [as this committee has heard before](#), and was confirmed last month, is still [unrecyclable anywhere in the US](#). Maryland Sierra Club has [painstakingly documented over 430 synthetic fields](#) across 19 counties and Baltimore city, with many areas not yet inventoried.

Toxic Contents: Each field has [known](#) toxic components including heavy metals and neurotoxins, plus carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, the forever-chemicals [PFAS](#), and fish-killing [6PPD quinone found in all tires](#). The evidence is incontrovertible that [6PPD quinone is causing the 95% mortality in endangered coho salmon](#) on the West Coast. It seems unlikely that coho salmon are unique in this sensitivity. While we won't stop using tires tomorrow, we can manage where and how we dispose of 40,000 granulated waste tires. The transfer and disposal of used synthetic turf fields must be managed responsibly.

Finally, HB457 lets buyers like parks departments and school districts know a vendor will comply with House Bill 457 so they aren't embarrassed to find their old field is now a neighborhood's unsightly toxic problem. By injecting transparency into the process, HB457 will identify the party responsible for disposal of each used synthetic turf field that is removed in Maryland.

**We ask for your support for HB457 and strongly urge a favorable report.**

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WDC President

Diana E. Conway  
WDC Environment Committee

Cynthia Rubenstein  
Chair, WDC Advocacy