



# Creation Care

Baltimore-Washington Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## [HB0457: Environment - Synthetic Turf - Chain of Custody](#)

**Hearing Date: March 20, 2024**

**Bill Sponsor: Delegates Lehman**, Acevero, Addison, Allen, Alston, Amprey, Attar, Bagnall, Barnes, Boaf, Boyce, Charkoudian, Davis, Ebersole, Edelson, Fair, Foley, Forbes, Fraser-Hidalgo, Guyton, Guzzone, Harris, Healey, Hill, Holmes, Ivey, S. Johnson, D. Jones, Kaufman, J. Long, R. Long, Lopez, Love, Martinez, McCaskill, Palakovich Carr, Pasteur, Patterson, Pena-Melnyk, Phillips, Pruski, Qi, Ruth, Shetty, Simmons, Simpson, Smith, Solomon, Stein, Stewart, Taveras, Taylor, Terrasa, Vogel, Williams, Woods, and Ziegler

**Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**Submitting Organization: BWCUMC Creation Care** by Liz Feighner

**Position: Favorable**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the committee, the [Baltimore Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church Creation Care Advocacy & Action](#) is urging your support of HB0457, The Synthetic Turf Chain of Custody bill.

As United Methodists, we believe that “All creation is the Lord’s, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. ... God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect.” “We acknowledge the global impact of humanity’s disregard for God’s creation.” “We support and encourage social policies that serve to reduce and control the creation of industrial byproducts and waste;...” From Social Principles: [The Natural World in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church](#). “Confronted with the massive crisis of the deterioration of God’s creation and called to a ministry of reconciliation between God, humankind, and creation, we ask God’s forgiveness and commit ourselves to a new way of being that integrates environmental, economic and social justice.” (From: [Book of Resolutions, 1033](#))

In order to understand the amount of industrial byproducts and waste being produced, we need to be able to track the life cycle of synthetic turf. An average single 80,000 sq ft. field contains 40,000 lbs of plastic carpeting and 400,000 lbs of infill (usually granulated tire waste sometimes mixed with sand). Synthetic turf fields need to be replaced every 8-10 years adding to the toxic waste that needs to be dealt with. As of April 2022, Maryland had at least 380 synthetic turf playing fields, amounting to more than 71,000 tons of plastic carpet and infill, nearly 130,000 cubic yards of infill (the equivalent of 4,325 thirty-yard dumpsters), and 25.6 million square feet of plastic carpet (589 acres).

The estimate of the number of fields in all of Maryland was compiled by volunteer Sierra Club members as there is no official inventory for the massive amount of waste being produced. Nor is there a way to know whether this toxic waste was properly disposed of or [in rural 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.

This bill only requires MDE to establish a system to track the chain of custody of synthetic turf and turf infill installed on sports playing fields, from installation to removal, reuse, repurposing, recycling, and disposal and publish this chain of custody information on MDE's website. It is such a simple bill to execute so Maryland knows how toxic waste is being managed.

The state of Maryland needs to be tracking this massive toxic and hazardous waste to protect our waterways and our beloved Chesapeake Bay.

We urge a favorable report for HB0457.

Regards,

[Baltimore Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church Creation Care Advocacy & Action](#)

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