

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

Hearing Date: March 20, 2024

Bill Sponsor: Delegates Lehman

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Submitting: Liz Feighner

Position: Favorable

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the committee, my name is Liz Feighner and as a climate and plastic pollution activist, I am writing to urge the **support of HB0457**. This bill is very simple that sets up an easy tracking system for the complete life-cycle of synthetic turf used for playing and sports fields.

There is a tremendous amount of synthetic turf installed and being installed in Maryland and specifically in Howard County where I reside. Synthetic turf contains a multitude of toxic chemicals to aquatic and humans, including a toxic load of mixed proprietary (in other words, secret) chemical blends, including per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS - aka "forever chemicals"). An [Environment Human Health Inc. study](#) found high levels of lead in synturf, 500 to 1000 times higher than other fields (p.10) and there is NO safe level of lead.

HB457 establishes a simple chain of custody for synthetic turf fields, to track fields as they are installed or removed. It also sets up an online reporting system under the Maryland Department of the Environment. The burdens to reporting parties are minimal: just an online report. There are no fees or permits.

I believe it is Maryland's responsibility to know how much and what happens to synthetic turf when it reaches its usefulness playing capabilities. There is no official inventory of the number or location of synthetic turf playing fields in Maryland or where used fields have gone. We are relying on Sierra Club **volunteers** to document and locate synthetic turf fields. Since these fields contain large amounts of known toxins, it is incumbent that the state monitor and verify that these fields are being managed properly and not improperly/illegally dumped leaching these toxins into our waterways and our beloved Chesapeake Bay affecting our oysters and prized Maryland blue crabs.

I urge a favorable report for HB0457.

Liz Feighner

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