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Environment and Transportation
Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 457 – Environment – Synthetic Turf - Chain of Custody
SUPPORT**

GOOD AFTERNOON CHAIR KORMAN, VICE CHAIR BOYCE AND ESTEEMED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. FOR THE RECORD, I'M DELEGATE MARY LEHMAN, REQUESTING FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION OF HB 457, A BILL CREATING A CHAIN OF CUSTODY REPORTING SYSTEM FOR SYNTHETIC TURF PLAYING FIELDS.

THIS COMMITTEE AND THE FULL HOUSE HAVE PASSED THIS LEGISLATION TWICE – YOU HAVE AGREED WITH THE NEED TO FIND OUT WHERE THESE TURF FIELDS GO WHEN THEY ARE MOVED, TYPICALLY AT THE END OF THEIR 8-10 YEAR LIFE SPAN.

THE BILL REQUIRES TWO THINGS OF SYNTHETIC TURF FIELD OWNERS:

1. REPORT TO THE MD DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT WHERE THESE FIELDS ARE LOCATED AT THE TIME THE LAW TAKES EFFECT AND GOING FORWARD WHEN NEW FIELDS ARE INSTALLED; AND
2. REPORT TO MDE WHERE THE FIELDS GO IF THEY ARE MOVED – FROM ONE FACILITY TO ANOTHER, WHICH IS VERY RARE – OR DISPOSED OF BECAUSE THEY HAVE REACHED THE END OF THEIR LIFE.

MDE WILL POST THE INFORMATION ABOUT FIELD LOCATIONS AND MOVEMENT ON ITS WEB SITE.

THIS YEAR'S BILL IS ALMOST IDENTICAL TO THE VERSION OF THE BILL THAT PASSED THIS COMMITTEE LAST YEAR. HOWEVER, THERE IS A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT SUPPORTED BY THE TURF FIELD MANAGERS ASSOCIATION.

IT REQUIRES THE SELLER OF A SYNTHETIC TURF FIELD TO PROVIDE THE BUYER, PRIOR TO THE SALE, WITH INFORMATION RELATED TO THE COST OF FIELD MAINTENANCE AND REMOVAL, AS WELL AS THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE CUSTODIAN MUST REPORT TO THE STATE OF MARYLAND THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED IN THIS BILL.

WHY THE NEED TO KNOW?

SINCE 2021, MARYLAND SIERRA CLUB VOLUNTEERS HAVE LOCATED 437 SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS IN 19 OF MARYLAND'S COUNTIES AND IN BALTIMORE CITY. FOR THE 403 FIELDS WITH A REPORTED SIZE, THE WASTE PRODUCED OVER THE NEXT DECADE AS THEY ARE REPLACED WOULD AMOUNT TO:

- MORE THAN 79,000 TONS OF PLASTIC CARPET AND INFILL;
- MORE THAN 144,000 CUBIC YARDS OF INFILL, THE EQUIVALENT OF 4,819 30-YD DUMPSTERS; AND
- 28.9 MILLION SQUARE FEET OF PLASTIC CARPET (633 ACRES).

SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS POSE AN ENORMOUS SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL CHALLENGE GIVEN THEIR SIZE, NUMBER, AND THE FACT THAT THERE ARE FEW DISPOSAL SITES IN MARYLAND THAT WILL ACCEPT THEM.

BY TRACKING THEIR MOVEMENT, BOTH MDE AND INTERESTED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WILL HAVE ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT DISPOSAL PATTERNS AND LOCATIONS.

THE INFORMATION COLLECTED WILL HOLD INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABLE FOR ENSURING ADEQUATE OPTIONS FOR REUSE, RECYCLING, REPURPOSING AND DISPOSAL.

VIOLATORS OF THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS WILL FIRST BE ISSUED A WRITTEN NOTICE OF VIOLATION BY MDE; AND IF THEY DO NOT BECOME COMPLIANT, THEY CAN THEN BE ISSUED AN ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY THAT DOES NOT EXCEED \$5000.00

I BELIEVE DOCUMENTING THE CHAIN OF CUSTODY OF SYTHETIC TURF FIELDS IS A REASONABLE STEP FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND TO TAKE AT A POINT IN TIME MANY FIELDS ARE REACHING THEIR AVERAGE END-OF-LIFE, BASED ON THE DATA COLLECTED BY VOLUNTEERS, AND ENVIRONMENTALY SOUND DISPOSAL OPTIONS IN MARYLAND ARE EXTREMELY LIMITED.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PAST SUPPORT OF THIS BILL. I ASK YOUR FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION AGAIN THIS YEAR.