



February 13, 2024

**HB457 Environment - Synthetic Turf - Chain of Custody
Environment and Transportation Committee
Hearing February 16, 2024
FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and honorable members of the Committee,

The Green Towson Alliance writes in support of HB457, which will establish a chain of custody for synthetic turf fields by tracking the custodianship of the fields as they are installed and removed. HB457 calls for a simple online filing with the Maryland Department of the Environment with no associated permit or fee. This straight forward, low-burden system will help deter the improper disposal of synthetic turf fields.

Maryland has over 430 synthetic turf fields (as identified by the Sierra Club) and each field contains around 440,000 pounds of mixed plastic materials and infill which must be disposed of at the end of the field's life. These plastic materials include a plastic 'carpet' with over one billion blades and infill typically made of pulverized tires. A standard field will use 40,000 tires which are ground into highly mobile bits. Disposal of these fields presents a huge challenge due to the sheer volume of waste each field creates and due to the toxicity of the materials in the fields. Further, the plastic carpet and tire infill contain over 300 identified hazardous chemicals including cadmium, lead, phthalates and PFAS "forever chemicals" which can leach into our waterways and ground water when these fields are disposed of.

Synthetic turf fields have an average life of 8-12 years with fields used by professional teams often having a significantly shorter life span. Adding transparency to the end of life disposal of these fields is critical in preventing contamination of Maryland's water and soil. Maryland currently has no regulation regarding the disposal of synthetic turf fields.

We ask for a favorable report on HB457 as an important step toward safely managing the huge amount of waste created by the disposal of synthetic turf fields in our state.

Respectfully,
Kirsten Hoffman for the Green Towson Alliance
701 West Joppa Road
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The Green Towson Alliance unites Towson area environmentalists to create a greener, healthier and more beautiful community through collaboration and activism.