

Bill: HB 0457 Environment – Synthetic Turf – Chain of Custody
Position: Support Date: February 14, 2024 for Feb 16 hearing
Committee: HOUSE Environment and Transportation
POSITION: FAVORABLE
Organization: One Montgomery Green (submitted by Kathleen Michels)

Dear Chair Marc Korman and Vice Chair Regina T. Boyce,

One Montgomery Green respectfully requests that the Environment and Transportation committee consider this information and include it in the record.

The grass roots nonprofit One Montgomery Green* www.onemontgomerygreen.org supports the intent and goals of HB0457 for a Chain of Custody for synthetic turf in Maryland given the frequent installations, replacement and disposal of the large amount of plastic and granulated tire waste represented by each synthetic turf field installation. This waste is not accepted by incinerators and is often not accepted by municipal landfills. The question therefore is where, in or outside Maryland, is hundreds of tons of plastic and tire waste, from each field, disposed of every 8-10 years after wearing out and no longer safely useful as a field?

The sheer scope and scale of the synthetic turf waste problem, which is rising every year, is unique and has been highlighted by the volunteer statewide inventory led by the Maryland Sierra Club (found at this link: <https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/disposal-synturf-fields>). The number of individual installations as of early 2024 is well over 400 which represents upwards of 900 acres of plastic and tire waste which must be accounted for upon disposal. But the full and ever rising scope will not be known without official logging of the locations of the plastic carpets and their movements inside the state and to their final resting places inside or outside the state.

We want to emphasize that each and every one of those synthetic turf plastic carpet systems will soon be replaced, with the old carpet and infill removed and dumped or stockpiled at sites unknown into growing mountains of plastic or at best landfilled. Each plastic carpet system has likely already been replaced one or more times already. As of now after decades of promises and the finding of synturf contamination of the plastic carpets, none has been or can be safely recycled . Hundreds of tons per field of forever waste synturf carpeting full of forever chemicals such as PFAS, has already been found by volunteers to be disposed of outside of landfills.

The synthetic turf council itself has promoted a voluntary chain of custody. Without a publicly accessible tracking system voluntary has not worked and provides no accountability to the public or to the places the waste is dumped on.

It is all of our children, grandchildren and beyond who will have to find and clean up this waste, An official Chain of Custody filed with the state at least will make it easier to find! Please support the synturf chain of custody bill and at least give them a fighting chance .

**NOTE: One Montgomery Green is a 501C3 grassroots non-profit which seeks to catalyze the county's transition to a sustainable economy, facilitate environmental responsibility among businesses, residents, and government, and increase the quality of life for all Montgomery County residents. Every OMG sustainability initiative begins with a foundation of diversity, justice, equity and inclusion woven throughout the process, which reflects the eclectic background and culture of the residents of Montgomery County, MD.*

OMreen is dedicated to engaging the community in education and outreach that promotes sustainable communities with a "visibly green" and healthy environmental footprint. In an effort to empower and educate the public to better adapt and mitigate the impact of climate change, OMGreen has two main projects; a climate resilience project whose goal is to engage and educate communities by creating an assessment tool and a response plan that addresses climate change vulnerabilities, resilience, and adaptation; and the Clean Headwaters Program, a six-session course offering high school students an opportunity to perform hands-on community monitoring to assess the extent of plastic pollution of local streams.