



**Committee:** Environment and Transportation  
**Testimony on:** HB0457 - Environment - Synthetic Turf - Chain of Custody  
**Organization:** Montgomery Countryside Alliance  
**Submitting:** Caroline Taylor, Executive Director  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Hearing Date:** February 16, 2024

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

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Montgomery Countryside Alliance in support of HB457, the synthetic turf chain of custody bill. Synthetic turf fields represent an easily overlooked challenge: What happens to the old fields when they're no longer usable? Where do old fields go?

**The answer matters** because there are over 430 synthetic fields in Maryland alone, and each one has to be removed, usually after about a decade. A single field weighs hundreds of tons and includes a daunting list of toxic contents including numerous known carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, heavy metals, PFAS, and more. Additionally, these plastic fields will generate significant amounts of microplastic debris if they are improperly disposed of. The infill on synthetic turf fields is very fine-grained material, usually pulverized waste tires, that easily disperses if left uncontained.

This issue is especially salient for MCA because of what happened just one hundred miles north of our Agricultural Reserve, to a farmer in Dauphin County, PA. As reported in the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#), the Pennsylvania farmer was approached in 2018, to store used artificial turf while the owner waited for a recycling facility to be built. Hundreds of rolls of used turf were stacked ten feet high and visible from the road. But after two years, the rent payments stopped, and the facility has not broken ground. Meanwhile the Department of Environmental Protection received complaints about the unsightly stacks, calling it a "public nuisance." The result is over 1,000 rolls of deteriorating synthetic turf out in the open, contaminating the surrounding soil and groundwater of the farm with toxic chemicals and microplastic debris.

In order to prevent this scenario from expanding to Maryland, **we urge the Committee to give HB457 a FAVORABLE report.**

Philadelphia Inquirer 12-23-23

**[Forever Fields - How PA became a dumping ground for discarded artificial turf](#)**

<https://www.inquirer.com/news/pennsylvania/artificial-turf-pfas-rematch-pennsylvania-dumping-ground-20231213.html?query=forever%20fields>