



HB457: Environment – Synthetic Turf – Chain of Custody
House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 16, 2024

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

Clean Water Action supports HB457 to create a chain of custody for synthetic turf fields. This will create transparency across the installation, removal, and transfer of each synthetic turf field. Chain of custody will deter improper disposal and prevent water and soil pollution. HB457 sets up an online reporting system under the Maryland Department of the Environment with minimal burdens and no additional fees or permits.

Used synthetic turf fields are a major waste challenge because not only are they bulky and volumetrically large, but they are also made of toxic materials. A single field is about 440,000 pounds of bulky, mixed plastic waste and infill. The infill is generally made of pulverized tires, which are themselves toxic and a waste challenge.

The Maryland Sierra Club surveyed fields across the state and identified over 430 plastic fields. These fields generally have a lifespan of 8-12 years, after which they need to be disposed of. There are no regulations on the disposal of synthetic turf. While HB457 does not impose new regulations on how they are disposed of, it does track where and gives the state more information to understand where these stockpiles of old tire crumb and other plastics are.

HB457 addresses this problem for Maryland with a sensible, low-burden method of preventing contamination from chemicals in synthetic turf and from microplastic debris, in light of the rising number of synthetic turf fields in Maryland. Accordingly, we recommend a FAVORABLE report for HB457.

Thank you,

Emily Ranson
Chesapeake Regional Director
Clean Water Action
eranson@cleanwater.org