



**February 16, 2024**

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**SUPPORT: HB457 - Environment – Synthetic Turf – Chain of Custody**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

**Maryland LCV supports HB457 - Environment – Synthetic Turf – Chain of Custody, and we thank Delegate Lehman for her longtime leadership on this issue.**

According to the Synthetic Turf Council, synthetic turf sports fields have a lifespan of only 8-10 years, after which they require disposal, recycling or incineration. Each playing field, of which there are more than 430 in the state of Maryland, generates 220 tons of waste. This waste is known to contain heavy metals, PFAS (“forever chemicals”), and carcinogens. Some of these toxics are known to end up in our marine environment, with detrimental effects to both humans and marine animals.

At present, despite industry claims of improving the recycling rate of these mounds of waste, there are no certified facilities that can recycle them in the United States, and only 1 in all of Europe. Given the vast quantity of this waste, and the lack of transparency in where it ends up, much of this is suspected to end up in developing parts of the world such as Africa and Malaysia, along with rural landfills here in the U.S. Some of this has been documented as ending up in illegal waste dumps, and facilities that are not prepared to handle this type of waste.

HB457 simply begins the process of documenting and tracking this material, from the time it enters the state of Maryland, through its useful life as a playing field here in the state, and throughout the waste process to its final destination. This system will put the burden on the custodian of the synthetic turf throughout its life cycle, making this information publicly available, and will assist Maryland in creating a more informed public policy around how to deal with this waste in an environmentally sound and equitable way. Along with similar policies in surrounding states, this could spur innovation in recycling, reduction of toxics used in manufacturing, and equity in waste that does end up in landfills.

**Maryland LCV urges a Favorable report on this important bill.**

Sources for this testimony:

Synthetic Turf Council

[https://www.syntheticurfCouncil.org/page/About\\_Synthetic\\_Turf](https://www.syntheticurfCouncil.org/page/About_Synthetic_Turf)

The Intercept

<https://theintercept.com/2019/10/08/pfas-chemicals-artificial-turf-soccer/>

New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/climate/salmon-kill-washington.html>