



TESTIMONY FOR HB0457 ENVIRONMENT – SYNTHETIC TURF – CHAIN OF CUSTODY

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Lehman

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0457 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Synthetic turf is an often-overlooked source of toxicity. It contains toxic metals, such as cadmium, lead and arsenic, in addition to phthalates, which may negatively affect some organs, including reproductive organs. Various substances, including old tires and silica sand, are used to make artificial grass so levels of toxins in artificial turf differ from one manufacturer to the next manufacturer.

Additionally, synthetic turf can negatively affect the environment in many ways. Hosing down artificial turf creates runoff, transferring its elements, such as chromium, to the ground and water supply. When it's time to dispose of artificial turf, it can take decades to break down fully in a landfill. Habitat erosion is another side effect of artificial grass because it does not provide a home or food for insects, birds and other animals.

In Maryland, synthetic turf is not regulated in any way. Often, it is thrown out when it is no longer useful and it sits in landfills. We don't even have information about how much synthetic turf is in Maryland and how it is being disposed of. This bill would ask the Department of the Environment to create a system to track the chain of custody from transportation, installation, removal, reuse or recycling and finally through disposal. It would also require a custodian of synthetic turf to report information about where it is installed by January 1, 2025. This information is necessary to understand exactly how much synthetic turf is in use and how it is disposed of.

The bill does not require any approval from the government – just reporting on the change in custody and is designed to provide transparency around the process. This reporting process helps both the buyer and the seller. It allows the seller to use their compliance and transparency as a selling point for the proper handling of the turf, and it allows the buyer to know that their purchase won't wind up being improperly dumped. It also will prevent improper disposal of a significant quantity of plastic, which Maryland needs to ensure is not being cavalierly dumped in landfills. If we cannot take this small step to

try to get a handle on the deluge of plastic pollution in Maryland, we will have no hope for ever getting out of this fossil fuel crisis.

Our members see this as a required first step to understand how this toxic substance is being handled and we feel that everyone involved in the chain of custody should be supportive of this requirement for themselves and the good of all Marylanders. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.