

Bill: HB1098, Use of Public Funds-Playground and Athletic Field Surfaces-Authorizations, Preferences, and Prohibitions

Name: Doug Lechliden

Position: Support

Chairman Delegate McIntosh and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Doug Lechliden and I am a lifelong resident and farmer in Montgomery County. I am here today in support of HB 1098. I am the past president of the Maryland Turfgrass Association.

I started my company, Laytonsville Landscaping, Inc. in 1989. Laytonsville Landscaping specialized in hydroseeding and sod installation. One of our first projects was the restoration of McCurdy Field, the temporary home of the Frederick Keys Baseball Team until the new stadium was completed.

Laytonsville Landscaping purchased sod in our early stages. We soon learned that our suppliers wanted payment on a monthly basis and payment for our services sometimes took up to ninety days. The solution was to grow our own product to gain flexibility with cash flow.

Laytonsville Landscaping, Inc. has through growth in sales, evolved into a full time farming operation. We employ 6 full time employees and 3 part time employees. 2019 sales topped 1.8 million including sod and other commodity crops.

For the past several years, every high school renovation in Maryland has required plastic carpet for the football field. This requirement has a negative financial impact on the 15 natural grass farmers in the state.

HB 1098 would give Maryland farmers an opportunity to sell their product for projects funded by public funds. HB 1098 would take a negative impact to Maryland farmers and turn it into a positive.

All Maryland Natural Turfgrass is grown under the Nutrient Management guidelines, as are all Maryland farm products. Natural Turfgrass is used in many projects to filter nutrients and impurities from stormwater. Almost all SWM ponds, permanent Micro-Bio ponds, and rain gardens are built with a full perimeter of Natural Turfgrass due to its ability to filter the water before it reaches the bottom of the pond.

Natural Turfgrass plays a big role in filtering ground water recharge and does its part in ensuring clean water reaches our tributaries and eventually the precious Bay.

This locally grown product is a job producer not only for farmers, but for local landscapers as well. Natural turf is produced, installed and maintained in Maryland for Marylanders.

Thank you for your time. I hope you will give a favorable vote to HB 1098.

Sincerely,



Doug Lechliden

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