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**HB 857 – ENVIRONMENT – SYNTHETIC TURF AND TURF INFILL – CHAIN OF
CUSTODY**

SUPPORT

GOOD MORNING MR. CHAIRMAN, MR. VICE CHAIR AND COLLEAGUES. I AM ASKING YOUR FAVORABLE REPORT FOR HB 857, A BILL THAT REQUIRES OWNERS AND MANUFACTURERS OF SYNTHETIC TURF AND TURF INFILL TO REPORT TRACKING INFORMATION TO THE MD DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT FOR PUBLICATION ON ITS WEB SITE.

SYNTHETIC TURF, ALSO CALLED ARTIFICIAL TURF (AND SOMETIMES REFERRED TO BY A BRAND NAME SUCH AS ASTROTURF OR FIELD TURF) HAS BEEN GROWING IN POPULARITY FOR DECADES. THAT POPULARITY HAS LED TO INCREASED INSTALLATION BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, RECREATION DEPARTMENTS, AND PRIVATE CLUBS. THAT HAS CREATED BOTH CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR REUSE, RECYCLING, REPURPOSING AND DISPOSAL.

AFTER TWO PRIOR ATTEMPTS TO LEGISLATE DISPOSAL REQUIREMENTS, I AM TAKING A SCALED BACK APPROACH WITH HB 857 THAT IS NONETHELESS AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP AT CREATING TRANSPARENCY AROUND SYTHETIC TURF AND TURF INFILL USE AND DISPOSAL.

THE BILL DOES THIS BY REQUIRING REPORTING TO MDE ABOUT WHERE FIELDS CURRENTLY EXIST IN MD AND WHERE THEY GO WHEN THEY ARE MOVED FOR REUSE, RECYCLING, REPURPOSING OR FINAL DISPOSAL.

TWO CATEGORIES OF REPORTERS: THE BILL PLACES REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY ON TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF ENTITIES.

1. **FOR SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS/INFILL INSTALLED PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 2022,** THE OWNER OF THAT FIELD IS THE REPORTING AGENCY. THAT COULD BE A SCHOOL SYSTEM, PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT, MUNICIPALITY, UNIVERSITY OR OTHER ENTITY.
2. **FOR SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS INSTALLED AFTER JANUARY 1, 2022,** THE PRODUCER(S)/MANUFACTURER(S) OF THE TURF FIELD/INFILL IS THE REPORTING AGENCY.

HB 857 IN NOT PRESCRIPTIVE THE PURPOSE OF HB 857 IS TO CREATE A REPOSITORY OF INFORMATION ON A PUBLIC WEB SITE ABOUT WHERE SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS EXIST IN MD AND WHERE THEY GO WHEN THEY ARE MOVED. IT DOES NOT ATTEMPT IN ANY WAY TO PRESCRIBE THE WAYS IN WHICH THE CARPET OR INFILL CAN OR SHOULD BE REUSED, REPURPOSED, RECYCLED OR DISPOSED OF. IT SAYS ONLY THAT THE INFORMATION MUST BE REPORTED TO MDE.

AMENDMENTS

THERE ARE MULTIPLE AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL; MOST OF THEM ARE CLARIFICATIONS REQUESTED BY OWNERS AND MDE. I CONSIDER THEM FRIENDLY AMENDMENTS AND ACCEPT THEM. TWO WERE CHANGES THAT I INITIATED:

1. DROPPING A REQUIREMENT THAT MDE APPROVE REUSE OF A FIELD; AND
2. ADDING PENALTY LANGUAGE FOR FAILURE TO REPORT TO MDE.

LEGISLATION THAT CARRIES NO PENALTIES IS NOT LIKELY TO BE EFFECTIVE. HB 857 USES PENALTY LANGUAGE FROM SECTIONS [9-334](#) AND [9-344](#) OF THE ENVIRONMENT ARTICLE, WHICH REFERENCE A WRITTEN WARNING BY MDE AND POSSIBLE FINES AT THE DISCRETION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL. THIS IS THE SAME PENALTY LANGUAGE USED IN HB 77, DELEGATE STEWART'S DRIVEWAY SEALANT BILL.

MR. CHAIRMAN, I BELIEVE THIS CHAIN OF CUSTODY BILL IS WORKABLE FOR BOTH OWNERS AND PRODUCERS AND IS A SIGNIFICANT FIRST STEP IN CREATING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY AROUND WHERE SYNTHETIC TURF AND TURF INFILL IS WITHIN THE STATE'S BOUNDARIES DURING ANY PHASE OF ITS LIFE CYCLE. I URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT.

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