



SB321 – Environment – Synthetic Turf and Turf Infill – Chain of Custody

Testimony before

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

February 2, 2022

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Madam Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Carol O’Keeffe, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in support of SB321, which will improve transparency around the life cycle of synthetic turf. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate Sen. Kagan’s leadership in sponsoring this legislation.

While synthetic turf/infill has some environmental benefits in that it requires no water or fertilizer, it is made of plastic and old, shredded tires that have a limited lifespan of eight to ten years and poses significant environmental hazards as it degrades. SB321 is the first step in achieving accountability in the disposal of degraded artificial turf by establishing a “chain of custody” requirement that achieves cradle to grave tracking of the manufacture, installation, use, reuse, recycling and final disposal of synthetic turf and infill. The data must be provided to the Department of Environment which is required to establish a website to display the data. The bill also establishes penalties.

The requirement of SB321 will achieve transparency to assure proper disposal of materials made of plastic or mostly plastic and other substances that pose a significant threat to our planet and to our collective health and wellbeing. The requirements are non-burdensome and recognize that producers of synthetic turf and infill are in the best position to provide the information for tracking system. We see this as the critical first step in the ultimate goal of properly addressing the environmental hazards of synthetic turf. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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