

# Senate Bill 0321

Testimony Of

**Scott Webber**

Before the

**Maryland Senate Education, Health, and Environment Committee**

Feb. 2, 2022

## **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and fellow members of the Committee:

My name is Scott Webber, proud MD citizen since 1986, currently living in Bethesda.

I come before you today not only as a passionate community advocate and parent, concerned about the environment and children [and adults and pets], but also as a small business owner in the technology field, a data-management expert, and a multi-generation Realtor. Accordingly, I speak as both a citizen and as a knowledgeable professional, not as much in the synthetic turf sphere, but as one with extensive personal and professional experience in what is really being envisioned with this bill – a simple digital record-keeping and tracking system.

### **PURPOSE:**

SB0321 is not about the head injury risk, heat absorption, or even the potential toxicity of synthetic turf fields. Those are far more complex issues for another bill on another day.

SB0321 is nothing more than the establishment – or utilization - of a TRACKING system for a particular type of building waste. That is all it is. In all reality, it really does not matter that this bill seeks to track synthetic turf waste, the issue is one of establishing a “Chain Of Custody” system within the Department of the Environment that is easy to understand, easy to access, easy to complete, and easy to track hazardous, potentially hazardous, bulky, or just plain concerning materials that are being disposed of in the State.

Synthetic Turf is not classified as a hazardous waste, but it does produce millions of pounds of questionable waste, from unknown sources, with unknown toxicity, that is being disposed of [dumped] in unknown locations, with unknown environmental and health impacts. The disposal of such a vast quantity of material should be tracked, and done so with sufficient historical data to be able to backtrace, investigate, and mitigate any issues that arise.

### **SAMPLE:**

One simple example would be the discovery of extremely high levels of lead in a particular disposal site. The State needs to be able to identify which [playing field] the material came from, when and who installed the material, and where the source material came from. A record of all sites containing the same source materials could then be accessed to investigate for similar levels of lead.

## **PROCESS:**

Such a tracking / tracing system is common, should be extremely simple to set up, and there are many examples of existing systems [technologically and regulatory] upon which to base any SynTurf tracking system.

Frequently in the development process, a business is required to pull permits, and track materials coming onto, or off of property. As an example, you might have to grade a property with a certain type of regulated grading material for a parking lot next to a protected wildlife environment, and provide a runoff plan.

You can't backfill an elementary school building with medical waste.

A 'Use and Occupancy' permit requires all sorts of information pertaining to use. [ie: For all-Season / Indoor team athletics, you need to go online and complete a SynTurf form...]

Syn Turf disposal should be no different than the process to dispose of a ½ full gas station fuel tank. You can't just dump it down the nearest drain.

In the real estate industry, the 'disposal' of a septic tank [decommissioning/filling in] requires auditable tracking, and per above, such 'tracking' is tied to building permits for new plumbing [adding additional toilets and/or connecting to public water]

Reporting could be on a building permit, site plan or a disposal permit.

It would be easy to track via a normal Businesses Personal Property Tax Form.

Syn-Turf field is a multi-thousand – or multi-hundred-thousand dollar asset that is likely to be willingly tracked for depreciation etc. on a tax return during it's life anyway.

Just as a car sits on a corporate balance sheet – or even on a Schedule C - until a specific question is asked on TurboTax every year, 'Did you dispose of it this year?' tracking the use of such an infrequently modified asset is NOT a relatively onerous requirement.

This is a VERY simple process that just needs to start.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT:**

I would respectfully request that the bill be amended to include timeframes. I would like to see voluntary compliance completed within 1 year of system launch, or within 60 days of direct contact from the MDE.

Most Sincerely,

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