Committee: Environment & Transportation
Testimony on: HB131 - Environment-Synthetic Turf & Turf Infill-Chain of Custody
Submitting: Liz Feighner
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: January 19, 2022

As a resident of Howard County, District 13, who is concerned about plastic waste, I urge you to vote favorably on HB131. Howard County has installed synthetic turf throughout and I have concerns about how the turf is being handled for disposal when it has reached its useful lifespan.

This bill would require manufacturers and owners of synthetic turf and turf infill to report chain of custody of the turf and infill for reuse, recycling, or final disposal to the Department of the Environment. Currently there are no such regulations to track the entire synthetic turf life cycle despite the fact that each turf field contains tens of thousands of pounds of chemical-laden plastic and hundreds of thousands of pounds of granulated infill (usually tire waste, or alternative infills, and silica sand).

Synthetic turf's typical lifespan is a period of 8-10 years. Used synthetic turf materials may be landfilled, incinerated, repurposed or dumped in communities which then must deal with the waste. The synthetic component materials that make up artificial turf carpet systems contain known aquatic and human toxins, carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, heavy metals, carcinogens, and immune disruptors such as PFAS, or "forever chemicals."

A chain of custody is necessary to prevent illegal dumping or irresponsible disposal since the technology for recycling synthetic turf is complicated and has not been fully developed. Stakeholders and residents have the right to know what happens to these toxic materials and hold those responsible for the materials accountable through a documented chain of custody reporting. Transparency and accountability regarding synthetic turf disposal must be required.

I support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

Liz Feighner
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District 13