



HB1147

Environment - Playground Surfacing Materials - Prohibitions

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Hearing Date: Feb 28, 2024

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the committee, my name is Virginia Smith, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). **We urge support of HB1147**, Playground Surfacing Materials - Prohibitions, which will reduce children's harmful exposure to toxins by establishing clear toxicity standards on three dangerous chemicals in playground materials: Lead, PAHs and PFAS.

There has been a growing movement to install playground spaces that include the use of synthetic surfacing materials, which in some cases (e.g., synthetic turf and tire crumb/rubber) contain chemicals known to be hazardous. Children, and especially younger children, are uniquely vulnerable to the health effects of toxic environmental exposures through ingestion, inhalation or skin contact. Children also [breathe faster](#) per pound of body weight increasing the likelihood of inhalation exposure. When a child walks, runs, or falls on a surface an invisible cloud of dust from the surface surrounds them. In the case of rubber and plastic play surfaces, this dust cloud is a mixture of plastic, tire and other particles that have fallen to the surface.

It is important to note that while these three chemicals (lead, PAHs and/or PFAS) proposed in this bill can be measured separately, a child's exposure is cumulative, and synergistic. Today there is [undeniable proof](#), including from the [premier research institutions on children's environmental health](#), that tires contain multiple [toxic chemicals](#), all acting together on each child who visits a playground: carcinogens, heavy metals and endocrine disruptors, in addition to microplastic contamination.

As the national leaders in epidemiology and pediatrics of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai concluded, **"given the hazards associated with recycled tire rubber, it is our recommendation that [these products never be used](#) as surfaces where children play."**

Materials with high levels of lead, PAHs and/or PFAS are unacceptable for use on playgrounds.

The state of Maryland needs to protect our children from these highly toxic and dangerous chemicals and this bill will accomplish this goal for playground safety.

We urge a favorable report for HB1147.

Virginia Smith
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