



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

HB1147, Environment - Playground Surfacing Materials - Prohibitions
House Environment and Transportation Committee, February 28, 2024
Position: FAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and honorable members of the committee, Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2024 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC strongly urges this committee to support HB1147. By setting clear toxicity standards for our playgrounds, this bill protects children from exposure to three dangerous chemicals: Lead, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Many Maryland playgrounds are covered with synthetic materials, typically used tires processed into [poured-in-place](#) (PIP) surfaces, or shredded tire mulch or chunks. Children, and especially younger children, are uniquely vulnerable to the health effects of toxic environmental exposures through ingestion, inhalation or dermal uptake. 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.

Lead is the oldest toxin on the list. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [World Health Organization](#) confirm there is no known safe level of lead exposure. Relatively low levels of lead exposure that were previously considered 'safe' have been shown to damage children's health and impair their cognitive development. And at high levels [lead poisoning can be fatal](#). The only [solution to lead poisoning is prevention](#). HB1147 moves us significantly toward that goal. Maryland-area jurisdictions have struggled after community-led testing found high lead levels in local playgrounds and schools, including in [Montgomery County](#), [Prince George's County](#), and [Washington, D.C.](#)

PAHs: These are a class of [over 100 chemicals](#) that occur naturally in coal, crude oil, and gasoline and result from burning, especially the incomplete burning, of coal, oil, gas, wood, garbage, and tobacco. According to a peer-reviewed, published study, "Noticeably, [cancer risk is approximately 10 times higher](#) in poured rubber surfaced playgrounds than in uncovered soil playgrounds." Another leading study concludes that "the presence of a high number of harmful compounds, frequently at high or extremely high levels, in these recycled



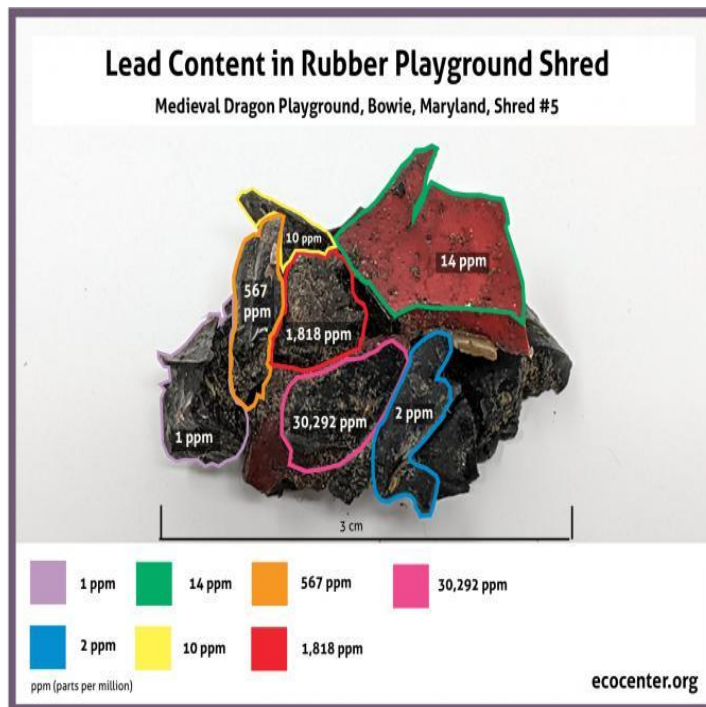
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rubber materials [they] should be carefully controlled, and their final use should be [restricted or even prohibited in some cases.](#)”

PFAS: The over 12,000 PFAS used today have been linked to a wide range of health problems in animal and human studies including [kidney and testicular cancer](#), [hormone and endocrine disruption](#), [liver and thyroid](#) problems, [reduced vaccine effectiveness](#), reproductive harm and abnormal fetal development. As the science has evolved, EPA-issued health advisories reflect findings that they are more toxic at lower levels than scientists previously knew.



<https://www.ecocenter.org/new-study-lead-crumb-rubber-playgrounds-maryland-and-virginia>

By enacting HB1147, Maryland can secure safer playgrounds, healthier children, and a healthier environment. **WDC respectfully urges a favorable report for HB1147.**

Tazeen Ahmad
WDC President

Diana Conway
WDC Environment
Subcommittee

Cynthia Rubenstein
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