



POSITION STATEMENT

Bill: HB 857 – Environment - Synthetic Turf and Turf Infill - Chain of Custody and Reuse

Position: SUPPORT W/ AMENDMENTS **Date:** February 24, 2021

Contact: Adrian R. Gardner, General Counsel

What The Bill Does: With certain amendments to be offered by the sponsor, this straight-forward bill would enable the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to collect reliable information about the lifecycle of synthetic turf or turf infill materials in the state by requiring owners to report when and how they recycle or dispose of those materials.

Why We Support: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (“Commission”) is responsible for managing 10 existing synthetic turf fields serving the everyday needs of thousands of active families in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties. In this context, the managers of our park and recreation operations anticipate an ongoing process of adding new fields and restoring old ones to keep up with a growing community demand.

At the same time, our agency leaders recognize competing community concerns exist about the long-term environmental impact when synthetic materials enter the disposal or recycling streams. As an agency founded in part to pursue environmental stewardship, the Commission supports responsible reuse and disposal of turf materials with a focus on ensuring recycling. As amended, this legislation would establish transparency and public accountability by mandating disclosure to MDE, coupled with appropriate fines for field owners who fail to disclose their disposal activities.

The Commission thanks the sponsor for inviting the active involvement of our senior department leaders, and the collaborative development of the following three amendments that will: (1) Strike in its entirety Section 9-2303 (*on page 3, beginning at line 18 and ending with line 23*); (2) Modify the provision at Section 9-2302, subsection (c), by striking the phrase “ESTABLISH A SYSTEM TO TRACK” and substituting the word “REPORT” (*on page 3, at line 5*); and, (3) adding a penalty provision that imposes fines for violating the reporting requirement in Section 9-2302. Our team plans to achieve compliance by modifying our current procurement process to require the necessary information regarding disposal practices and reporting required by this bill.

With those amendments, the Commission fully supports this bill and urges a favorable report.

#

Office of the General Counsel
221 Prince George Street, First Floor, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410.263.1930 tel.

6611 Kenilworth Avenue, Suite 200, Riverdale, Maryland 20737
301.454.1670 tel.