

HB0131 - SUPPORT
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HB 131 SUPPORT - Environment – Synthetic Turf and Turf Infill – Chain of Custody
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Thank you for allowing our testimony today in strong support of HB0131. We urge you to vote **favorably** on HB0131.

We are Leila Granier and Cynthia Jacobson, and we are testifying as high school seniors and residents of Montgomery County. We are speaking in support of HB0131 for chain of custody on synthetic turf fields and infill. As interns, we have conducted primary research on the chain of custody issue in summer of 2021 for the Safe Healthy Playing Fields, Inc. a 501.c3.

The Synthetic Turf Council and its clients are not honoring their commitment to responsible recycling. They have long claimed to be good stewards with repurposing, reusing and recycling. This is not what we found, but this is their chance to show their commitment. This bill requires them to do what they have long talked about and clients are sure to look favorably on it as it assures them that they are dealing with an honest, transparent, accountable vendor. We urge them to embrace this opportunity to demonstrate their responsibility toward communities and the environment.

If we do not impose the requirement for minimal reporting, producers will not provide it voluntarily. We spent many hours last summer collecting data and tracking the exact information that is called for in HB0131. Despite these companies' commitment to recycling, we found that it is impossible to track field materials unless there is explicit cooperation from the field owners and producers. This bill has the potential to be constructive since it will require field owners to take a small amount of responsibility for the disposal of what we calculate to be about 800,000 pounds of pulverized tire crumb and 100,000 pounds of pulverized plastic per average 80,000 sq ft field (this is based on an average 40,000 tires per average field multiplied by 20 pounds per average tire.)

The producers are not being held responsible for the disposal of massive amounts of potentially environmentally harmful material. We know from field maintenance personnel that fields lose 20,000-100,000 pounds of tire crumbs into the local environment and stormwater system per year. If they are being dumped, or even if they are going to a landfill or incinerator, they pose a problem not only to the community that houses the field, but also to the location where they are dumped. Field owners are not currently held responsible for the disposal process, leaving the local community to clean up the mess. Frankly, it is our generation that will have to deal with the consequences.

Used fields from Maryland are being dumped in landfills in MD, VA, and likely in other places. They get dumped on private property in farm fields, woods, and rural areas. They are now being reinstalled in residential neighborhoods as well.

Downstream effects can be devastating on watersheds. In order to shed light on and develop an understanding of these contamination levels in local watersheds, it is imperative that we track this chain of custody in the disposal process.

It is critical to recognize the scale of this issue. We are dealing with an enormous amount of loose and unencapsulated synthetic material. We argue that if a producer sells a synthetic field with about 800,000 pounds of pulverized tires and silica sand, and about 100,000 pounds of multiple types of plastic, then they should absolutely be held responsible for the disposal of that product. As of now, they are not.

The goal of this bill is not to infringe on the producers, companies, or field owners, but rather to apply a standard of responsibility and transparency in their disposal methods, which impact local communities. This bill is asking for the bare minimum. There is no requirement for any approval from the government. They just have to list the facts. We simply want to know where the material goes.

It is our generation that must clean up the mess caused by the decisions being made now. At least give us a fighting chance to know where to begin.

We support this bill and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.