



HB1147 Environment - Playground Surfacing Materials - Prohibitions
Environment and Transportation Committee
Hearing February 28, 2024
FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and honorable members of the Committee,

The Green Towson Alliance writes in support of HB1147, which is essential to reduce children's exposure to harmful lead, per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) chemicals where they play. The chemicals of concern mentioned in this bill are known to be dangerous to all, but especially to growing and developing children.

The use of synthetic playground surfaces has increased dramatically in recent years, and many studies have documented various chemicals hazardous to human health in the synthetic turf, rubber, and tire crumb used to make these playground surfaces. These chemicals include: *lead* which causes brain, nervous system and kidney damage and has previously been banned in other children's products, *PFAS* or "*forever chemicals*", which have a correlation with lower levels of immunity and increased infections in children, as well as changes in liver enzymes and the immune systems and the increase of certain cancers in adults, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) which are absorbed through the skin, inhalation and hand-to-mouth activity and are reasonably expected to be carcinogens.

With even low levels of activity on synthetic play surfaces, inhalable particulate matter containing these dangerous chemicals is kicked up and the amount of particulate matter kicked up increases with the age of the field.¹ A 2013 study from 9 recycled rubber play surfaces found harmful chemicals in all and most contained high levels of PAHs. These PAHs are released by heat at both moderate and higher temperatures and can be inhaled and absorbed through the skin by children playing on the field.²

Children are much more likely than adults to be harmed by the chemical exposure from synthetic play surfaces as they are smaller and their bodies are still developing. Alternatively, playing on natural surfaces in a natural setting has great benefits to our health and may even equip our bodies to resist inflammation, allergies and asthma.

We urge a favorable report on HB1147.

Respectfully,

Kirsten Hoffman for the Green Towson Alliance

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The Green Towson Alliance unites Towson area environmentalists to create a greener, healthier and more beautiful community through collaboration and activism.

¹ Shalat SL. An evaluation of potential exposures to lead and other metals as the result of aerosolized particulate matter from artificial turf playing fields. 2011. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

<http://www.nj.gov/dep/dsr/publications/artificial-turf-report.pdf>

² Llompart M, Sanchez-Prado L, Lamas JP, Garcia-Jares C, et al. Hazardous Organic Chemicals in Rubber Recycled Tire Playgrounds and Pavers. *Chemosphere*. 2013;90(2):423-431. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0045653512009848>