

LD 1177

Dear Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

In support of a Moratorium of the installation or re installation of Artificial Turf.

Artificial turf is not usually recycled due to the difficulty separating the disparate components. These products do not decompose and rebuild soils, instead they contaminate them. Unlike sod, artificial turf does not renew itself, but after around 10 years must be removed and continue to break into smaller and smaller pieces. Incineration puts the surrounding community at risk for chemical exposure. In the landfill micro plastics migrate into rain and landfill runoff adding to the toxic load of Maine waterways and aquifer.

The 'useful life' of artificial turf is problematic. Community health is impacted due to exposure to the PFAS, phthalates and heavy metals in a always green field of plastics. Children who play on artificial turf are more exposed to these toxins through inhalation, absorption through their skin, or ingesting them. While the un-turf may save money in the short term by eliminating regular regular field maintenance, the eventual costs of removal, replacement, plus disease and polluted aquifer far exceed those savings and greatly diminish the quality of life of residents.

I also offer a more poetic view of the issue. Please consider enjoying a picnic with friends or family on a field of plastic; a cloth spread with good foods as you sit or laze beside your companions on the stiff blades upright on a manufactured chemical base. Hopefully its not a summer day when temperatures of a chem lawn can rise over 200°F on a 98°F day. If there are children in your gathering who run around and fall they may get a 'turf burn'.

If it is cooler weather perhaps you were thinking of a little cook out but were warned petrochemical products are highly flammable. That is why many fields have added toxic contain flame-retardants. That is why many fields covered with these products have added toxic contain flame-retardants (like the flame retardants leaked at the former Brunswick Air Station recently) .

My point is that artificial turf is sold as a utilitarian product requiring less maintenance but lacks the sensory stimulus to satisfy a basic human need; to make contact with the natural world. Shredded tires don't keep children safe, they expose them to toxins and hide the living soil from them. Children who play on artificial coverings are deprived of contact with the dirt, mud, bugs, weeds or surprise wild strawberry that inspires curiosity and joy.

For these reasons and more, I respectfully ask that you support a three-year moratorium on the installation or re-installation of artificial turf. I urge you to vote **ought to pass** on this important measure.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Thank you,
Jane Herbert
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