

Jill Higgins
Bernard
LD 1177

Testimony of Jill Higgins, Bernard, ME, Previous Coordinator of A Climate to Thrive and Sustainable MDI, in SUPPORT of...

LD 1177: Resolve, Establishing a 3-year Moratorium on the Installation or Reinstallation of Synthetic Turf and Requiring a Study of the Public Health and Environmental Risks of Synthetic Turf

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

Thank you for your work to protect our environment and environmental health. My name is Jill Higgins. I am a resident of Bernard, ME on Mount Desert Island. I'm a mother, grandmother and retired teacher who has done a lot of research about plastics and toxic chemicals, and I'm writing in support of LD 1177, which would create a three-year moratorium and study on the use of new artificial turf.

Here in Maine (and many other places), we have been learning the hard way about the toxicity of chemicals like PFAS that stay in our environment forever and cause grave health and developmental effects for people and animals. Synthetic turf is another source of these forever chemicals that can affect our children as it breaks down into small particles that can be inhaled and absorbed.

Numerous studies have shown that chemicals identified in artificial turf are known carcinogens, neurotoxins, mutagens, and endocrine disruptors. With developmental and health problems and special education needs rapidly increasing, it is vitally important that we protect our children and eco-systems by not installing anymore synthetic turf until or unless it has been proven to be safe.

According to Dr. Joel Forman, Professor of Pediatric Medicine, Mt Sinai School of Medicine, "We've done a very poor job of testing these chemicals [found in synthetic turf carpets] to ascertain whether or not they are toxic. ... And then when it comes to the more specific question 'What do we know about the impact of these chemicals might have on early childhood development?' - the answer is 'we have no information at all on about 80% of the chemicals.' Which is to say that every day, our children – and that includes fetuses, infants, young children – are exposed to a whole suite of chemicals of simply unknown toxicity which I consider to be an inherently risky business."

I urge you to vote unanimously "Ought to Pass" on LD 1177.

Thank you for your time,
Jill Higgins, Bernard, ME