



Friends of Casco Bay Casco BAYKEEPER

April 9, 2025

Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Maine State Legislature
Cross Building, Room 216
Augusta, Maine
ENR@legislature.maine.gov

Re: Friends of Casco Bay's Testimony 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

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Distinguished Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

Please accept Friends of Casco Bay's testimony 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 and vote that this bill OUGHT TO PASS. There are two major reasons to support this moratorium: (1) the plastic used in artificial turf leaches harmful chemicals and microplastics that harm our waters; and (2) artificial turf creates impervious surfaces that increase stormwater pollution.

For over 35 years, Friends of Casco Bay has worked to improve and protect the environmental health of Casco Bay. In the course of our water quality monitoring, we have collected and analyzed water samples for microplastics. At all locations in Casco Bay, we found plastic microfibers. We suspect that some of the microfibers come from land-based sources. Scientific studies confirm that artificial turf fields shed microfibers as the plastic breaks down.¹ Microplastics, which are visible only under a microscope, are extremely hard to remove from the environment and harm marine life which ingest it. They can impede digestion and interfere with absorption. The full effects of the impacts that microplastics have on the environment are not yet understood. Therefore, having time to study the issue makes sense.

Moreover, the leading cause of stormwater pollution stems from altering the natural landscape and thus its ability to filter water. As humans we do this by paving, building, and laying down materials such as artificial turf which are impervious, *i.e.* do not allow water to filter and percolate through soil. When rainfall sheets off these impervious surfaces it flows at higher volumes, and often higher temperature, directly into surface water. It carries with it whatever toxins are on those surfaces, lowering water quality. As Maine continues to grow and develop, it is essential that we leave in place natural filtering systems wherever possible. Artificial turf is not a need, it is a luxury that our environment cannot afford.

¹ William P. de Haan, et al. The dark side of artificial greening: Plastic turfs as widespread pollutants of aquatic environments, *Environmental Pollution*, Volume 334 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2023.122094>. Further, in September of 2023, the European Union enacted a ban on the sale of products containing intentionally added microplastics and specifically included granular artificial turf infill within its scope.

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For the foregoing reasons, we urge this committee to vote OUGHT TO PASS. Please feel free to contact us with questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ivy L. Frignoca'.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Heather R. Kenyon'.

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