

Testimony of Lillian Hyce

In Support of LD 1177 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

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Maine Legislature, Augusta, ME
April 09, 2025

Representative Gramlich, President Daughtry, and members of the Committee, thank you for reading my testimony. My name is Lillian Hyce, and I have lived in Waterville for almost 4 years as a student at Colby College. I am about to graduate this May with a BA in biology with a concentration in neuroscience and an accompanying minor in environmental science. My minor has allowed me to take many courses in public health, including Global Public Health and the Pollution and Human Health course in which I am currently enrolled this semester. I am unfortunately unavailable to deliver in-person testimony, but have taken the opportunity to submit written testimony.

I am testifying in **support** of LD 1177 because synthetic turf is comprised of several families of toxic chemicals harmful to human health and the environment. As a former athlete, an aunt of five children, and a once young girl who spent many hours a week on synthetic turf fields, I have personally witnessed and experienced the many routes of exposure to these chemicals through the turf. I remember having to wash my hands and body multiple times as a child after soccer practice to remove the black cast the turf would leave on my skin. If exposed wounds from athletic activity, which are quite common in my experience, come in contact with the chemicals in turf, there is a direct entry point into the bloodstream. My nieces and nephews have all attended “toddler play time” events on synthetic turf fields, unconsciously, or even consciously for small children, ingesting the small pieces of shredded tires and the green plastic blades.

I would like to focus this testimony on a specific chemical family. The presence of phthalates has been confirmed in synthetic turf. Phthalates are known endocrine disruptors that accumulate in the body. Evidence shows that maternal phthalate exposure has anti-testosterone properties on male fetuses by blocking a testosterone spike necessary for proper male fetal development, pathologically resulting in testicular dysgenesis syndrome. Additionally, phthalate exposure has various adverse health effects on women and girls, such as fertility and pregnancy problems and attention and learning disabilities, respectively.

Higher exposure in children is particularly concerning. We have a responsibility to protect and advocate for the safety of all Mainers, but especially children who do not have the health and policy literacy to understand the consequences of toxics exposure from synthetic turf. Endocrine

disruption is increasingly dangerous in fetuses, infants, and children. Proper development of the reproductive, neurological, and immunological systems in this vulnerable population all rely on signals from hormones in very narrow windows. Chemical highjacking of these systems at a young age can render permanent physiological damage that carries into adulthood. Children also do not have as robust immune systems, DNA repair mechanisms, blood-brain barriers, or detoxifying enzymes as adults to combat exposure to toxic chemicals, leaving them increasingly susceptible to adverse health effects.

Prohibiting the installation and reinstallation of synthetic turf, as described in this bill, is a necessary action to protect the children and the greater population of Maine. The language of the bill also allows time to conduct a proper risk assessment to evaluate public health repercussions without further human exposure.

Please vote *ought to pass* on LD 1177. Thank you for your time.