

Testimony of Makda Tadess.

In Support of LD 1177 An Act to 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

Before the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Maine

Legislature, Waterville, ME

April 8, 2025

Senator Bennett, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Committee, thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. My name is Makda Tadess, and I am a junior at Colby College majoring in environmental policy. In my public health course *Pollution and Human Health*, I have learned about harmful chemicals such as PFAS and phthalates, which pose serious risks to human health and contribute to heavy environmental degradation. As a student and community member of Waterville, I find it important to use my education to help advocate for the passing of LD 1177.

I am supporting LD 1177 because I want to help my community stay safe from harmful carginic chemicals in artificial turf, and also keep massive amounts of microplastics from entering the environment. In addition, I want to highlight that as a college student many of my peers have been playing in sports that use artificial turf for most of their lives and I am genuinely afraid for their health. It is known that synthetic turf is made out of chemical compounds such as plasticizers, flame retardants and stabilizers which can easily get in the bodies of students and accumulate through time. These substances don't easily break down in the body and it is not secreted, instead it sends signals in the body that mimic naturally occurring hormones. This is very dangerous as hormones regulate important body functions, and even if we don't see impacts on students now, the risk of body burdens occurring later in life is still present.

This paints a very scary picture, especially when thinking about thousands of kids in Maine inhaling nanoparticles of shredded up waste tires every time they get on a synthetic turf. Most families are not even aware of the risks of their children playing on synthetic turf, so we are essentially imposing serious health risks without their informed consent. Many organizations such as the *Safe Healthy Playing Fields* and *The National Football League's Player's Association* have been advocating for the replacement of synthetic turf with real grass for years. Essentially stating that real grass is better for the environment and overall health of athletes, not just for the reasons I stated above but they found that rates of contact injuries are lower when playing on real grass compared to synthetic turf.

For all of these reasons please vote to pass on LD 1177. Thank you.