

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, My name is Mary Linneman, South Portland. I am here to testify in support of LD 1177.

I'd like to address three reasons in support of a state-wide synthetic turf moratorium: it is Efficient; it is Effective; and it showcases Maine's Environmental Leadership.

Over the past six months I have been a member of a citizen group strongly advocating for the installation of grass rather than synthetic turf fields at South Portland High School. A synthetic turf referendum was defeated last November. Our persistent presence and comments at school board meetings have educated members and citizens about its negative consequences. South Portland voters will now have a choice between grass and synthetic fields in November 2025.

This process has been lengthy and exhausting for us- scientists, physicians, educators and seasoned environmentalists working together. Hours were spent doing research on the current scientific understanding of the consequences of synthetic turf installations. This work can be Efficiently accomplished at the state level, eliminating the need for similar duplication of effort by individual towns.

I believe that the state is in the best position to Effectively provide objective, vital information and guidance to municipalities related to synthetic and grass installations. Not all communities have the resources to collect and discern current scientific and technical details. The state can establish industry expectations and guidelines for decision-making to protect cities, the environment and people.

Maine has been an Environmental Leader in many endeavors. But we are not alone in attempting to convene an extensive research committee to investigate public health and environmental risks related to synthetic versus natural grass athletic fields. Four Northeast states have available studies resulting in restricting synthetic turf.

The moratorium as proposed is a good idea because:

It is Efficient - using existing research reports and consulting research institutes to gather objective and comprehensive information on public health and environmental impacts of synthetic turf.

It is Effective - suspending installation of synthetic fields so that all communities in Maine will have access to objective information regarding public health and environmental risks of synthetic turf for their consideration.

It showcases Maine's Environmental Leadership - joining other communities on the potential consequences of synthetic turf on environmental health and reminding Maine citizens of the need to reduce the use of plastics.