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January 21, 2026

REGARDING: Bill H 7141 - "Artificial Turf Chain of Custody"

Dear Members of the House Environmental and Natural Resources,

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the public hearing on Thursday, January 22, 2026 to speak in person about this very important bill. Therefore, I would be humbled if you would accept this written testimony for your review. I am absolutely in favor (proponent) of this bill.

My name is Stephanie Sloman. I live in Burrillville, RI. I am a retired environmental engineer. My husband and I moved to Rhode Island 40 years ago because of the rural-nature of the town. We fell in love with the town's forests, rivers, ponds, wetlands, and lakes. We fell in love with the ocean's beaches. We fell in love with the wildlife. We raised our family here. Our two children attended the Burrillville public school system.

I believe that it is imperative that all artificial turf be tracked via a chain of custody (from transportation to installation to removal, "to its reuse, recycling and final disposal"). As you know, artificial turf contains PFAS (forever chemicals) and dangerous/hazardous volatile organic compounds, and its infill contains heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, arsenic and others. Artificial turf is plastic and it quickly breaks down in the presence of UV light (from the sun). It is a fact that Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay's floor is already covered with microplastics from the plastic trash that enters the Bay. As I stated above, artificial turf, over time and quickly, breaks down into microplastics which eventually enter the Bay via rivers and streams and stormwater. The PFAS and VOCs (volatile organic compounds) from the artificial turf, and the heavy metals and other hazardous chemicals from the infill eventually enter the Bay as well.

Once the artificial turf is removed from its original location, it is vital that the state track it to its "grave". If the artificial turf (spewing the hazardous chemicals) ends up in landfills, those chemicals will continue to enter our precious environment and perhaps end up in our drinking water systems and groundwater. To state that there are companies that actually "recycle" artificial turf and/or its infill is absurd. There is no "safe" place for this material to go. Not only will the hazardous chemicals and heavy metals enter the environment, they will also enter the food chain and eventually into our own bodies. For example, now, in the Narragansett Bay, mollusks (clams- hard-shell and soft-shell, oysters, scallops, mussels, and others) are filtering the Bay water and consuming the microplastics and absorbing the chemicals which are entering the Bay. Fish eat the contaminated mollusks and become contaminated. You know the rest...We (and our children) eat the contaminated fish. It is a known fact that 90%+ of human beings have microplastics and PFAS and heavy metals in our bodies. These chemicals and microplastics are causing cancers and other health problems in us all.

Keep in mind that scientific studies and reports concerning the dangers of microplastics, PFAS, heavy metals and other hazardous chemicals found in/on/within artificial turf/infill are ongoing. Every few months, there is more and more data regarding the health hazards of children and adults who come in contact with artificial turf and its infill. Also, more information becomes available concerning the negative impacts of these chemicals in the food chain and the environment. Everything is connected.

However, it would not surprise me if some RI towns/cities will fight this bill as they do not wish to be custodians with such responsibilities. Tough. Those towns/cities, who may be against this bill, should remember that it is their responsibility to protect their residents from harm, whether it be from natural disasters, or from hazardous chemicals. The town/city councils' first duty is to protect their residents. PERIOD. This is NOT a political issue. It is a health issue. It is an environmental issue.

I would like to suggest a couple of changes to the bill, if I can. The first change/suggestion concerns Section 2, (c), (5) ["The weight of the artificial turf"]. I would suggest adding that the weight include the infill—not just the plastic carpet. If that is this bill's intent, to just track just the artificial turf itself, what will happen to the infill, containing all those hazardous, cancer-causing heavy metals? The second change/suggestion concerns the civil penalty amount of \$5,000. It is my opinion that the penalty should be higher...perhaps double or higher. It is my observation that ALL fines/penalties concerning companies' or municipalities' violations of the law (especially environmental and health law/regulations) are too small; thus, the violations continue, causing more harm.

Note: What really confounds me is that fact that The Synthetic Turf Council (and other companies) lobbies our legislatures (representatives and senators), trying to get them to "kill the bill". Is the money for campaigns more important than our children's lives? For once, I would like to read that our Rhode Island representatives and senators did the right thing...the safe thing... to save our future generations and our environment.

Rhode Island is known as the "Ocean State". Isn't it important to protect the ocean, and ourselves?

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my written testimony to you.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Sloman
Burrillville, RI