

Re: DRI No. 352 M4 2020, MVRHS Athletic Fields

February 1, 2021

Dear Martha's Vineyard Commission,

We are writing as the Aquinnah Climate and Energy Committee to urge the Commission to favor healthy grass playing fields over plastic fields in the management of the grounds at the high school.

We all want what is best for our children and for the generations to come. The international scientific community agrees that climate change may be the greatest threat to these future generations, and we believe it is time for decisionmakers such as yourselves to use a climate-focused lens when considering land management practices.

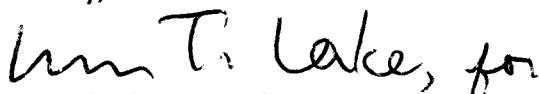
A field of plastic is not climate-friendly; it is heat trapping and does away with the critical living, carbon-sequestering carpet a healthy grass field can be. Healthy fields are powerful carbon sequestration tools. If we can increase global soil carbon stocks, rather than decreasing them, that can be a significant step toward halting the rise in CO2 concentration in the atmosphere from human activities. We can increase soil carbon through decisions big and small -- decisions like this one about how to care for school grounds.

This is a moment when we all need to stand up for a healthy environment -- not at the expense of our student athletes, but for them, and for all the next generations of children who will follow them. Well-managed grass playing fields can withstand a great deal of use, greater even than the well-used fields at MVRHS receive, and can be safe for our kids now while helping to protect the environment they will inherit in the long term.

We know our world has far too much plastic pollution; island children have in fact been leading the charge to do away with plastic straws and plastic bags. A plastic playing field like the one being considered at MVRHS contains as much plastic as 46 million plastic straws or 3.2 million plastic bags. This is not a time to be doubling down on plastic; our kids know this, and we should too.

We hope you will act to prioritize climate action and resist the installation of plastic fields at the high school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Lake, for". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aquinnah Climate and Energy Committee

William Lake, Co-chair

Noli Taylor, Co-chair

Meghan Gombos

Molly Purves

Isaac Taylor