

February 2, 2021

To: The Martha's Vineyard Commission
From: Chilmark Energy Committee
Re: MVRHS Athletic Field DRI – public comment

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed athletic complex project (including the installation of a 2.7-acre synthetic turf field) at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School.

The Chilmark Energy Committee advises the select board and the town at large on municipal and community-wide energy issues, including energy efficiency, supply resiliency, and sustainability along with the Town's transition to renewable energy. We aim to make thoughtful recommendations and energy plans for how the Town can best prepare for and respond to the inevitable storms, sea level rise and changes that are coming with climate change. It is through this lens that we view the MVRHS proposal and now write to express our concerns about the proposed project.

The choice to install an artificial turf field will contribute to climate change in a number of ways -- from the production of a 2.7 acre using petrochemical-based plastic, to its leaching microplastics during its use, finally resulting in a currently non-recyclable waste product – is inconsistent with Island's sustainability goals. It also replaces some amount of carbon-sequestering grass with a large life-cycle carbon load.

Our community has begun to make significant progress in addressing climate change mitigation goals. The MVC itself has adopted the goals set out in the 100% Renewable Martha's Vineyard warrant article, which include increasing the natural carbon sequestration ability of our ecosystems. Our farming community is moving toward widespread adoption of regenerative agriculture. Several towns have recognized the pernicious effects of the use of non-necessary plastics by adopting the plastic container ban brought forward by our elementary school children.

We therefore encourage the MVC to reject the use of synthetic turf and instead support new natural grass fields to be installed for the needed athletic complex upgrade. This is the healthy and sustainable alternative.

Sincerely,

Chilmark Energy Committee

Rob Hannemann, chair

Mollie Doyle

Mike Jacobs

Stephen Lewenberg