

## Paul Foley

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**From:** Allen K Healy [mermaidfarm@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 13, 2017 2:54 PM  
**To:** Paul Foley

To the Martha's Vineyard Commission,

February 13, 2017

Dear Commissioners,

I urge you to vote against the proposal to install artificial turf at the Martha's Vineyard High

School for the following reasons:

**1.** Artificial turf will require additional labor and technological "fixes" to deal with the literal blood, sweat, tears, and yes, animal feces and vomit that do happen on playing fields. Currently, nature degrades and digests all this unpleasantness at no cost.

**2.** Nature, (natural turf) cleans and infiltrates the rain that falls on playing fields. Artificial materials do not clean water and in fact might exude pollutants to the Martha's Vineyard aquifer. There is also a high probability that little bits of artificial turf might become airborne and be inhaled by athletes as well as spread out into the nearby woods.

**3.** Natural turf also sequesters carbon and creates oxygen.

**4.** Natural turf is a fire break that surrounds a good part of the school, whereas artificial turf is a fire hazard if someone tosses a cigarette butt or a fire starts in the state forest. Artificial turf also heats up in the summer, while grass turf naturally stays cooler due to evapotranspiration. This natural cooling is beneficial for athletes as well as nearby buildings and the planet.

**4.** The island has been blessed with flat, beautiful and unpolluted natural turf for its high school. Much of the infrastructure to maintain that turf: (irrigation, machines etc ) have already been purchased and are in place. As the climate heats up there may be a need to change up the old traditional turf grass species to southern adapted grass to deal with the new normal. There are consultants who specialize in natural turf and have techniques and knowledge about how to care for it properly well as ensure safe (and good looking) playing fields. The island needs to thoroughly investigate that knowledge before we buy into a new system of rubber and plastic fraught with the possibility of a cascade of failures.

**5.** Finally, according to a fact sheet entitled **Athletic Playing Fields and Artificial Turf, Considerations for Municipalities and Institutions** published by the Toxic Use Reduction Institute at U Mass Lowell, in the long term, artificial turf will cost the island more to install, maintain and remove than it will to maintain and nurture the natural turf that already exists.

Thank You for your time

Sincerely,

Caitlin Jones,

Mermaid Farm, Chilmark, Ma

[http://www.turi.org/TURI\\_Publications/TURI\\_Chemical\\_Fact\\_Sheets/Artificial\\_Turf2](http://www.turi.org/TURI_Publications/TURI_Chemical_Fact_Sheets/Artificial_Turf2)