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I am writing in support of the proposed turf field project at the MVRHS. Being a recent arrival to this beautiful isle from England and being a teacher at the school as well as coaching the varsity sailing and assisting in the training of the Varsity and JV Field hockey team, I felt it was my duty to express my feelings on this matter. As I'm sure you are aware, field hockey in Europe is far more significant than it is here, and for 30 years until I moved here, I played hockey and in my younger years at a state level. I've experienced the transition in the mid-'90s from playing on grass to turf, and I cannot say what a profound difference it made to the game across the UK and Europe. Gone were the days of luck being a big part of the game, and the accessibility it gave to the less talented players was astonishing. When my club managed to raise enough money to install their own Astor turf, participation increased by %25 within the 1st year of installment. This increase was not only seen in hockey participation. The club also saw a significant increase in participation in other sports that could use the surface. Soccer saw a growth in the under six age group to the extent that another two teams were created. The turf became the lynchpin of the local school's ability to host sporting fixtures throughout the rather wet and cold English winter. Midweek matches were never allowed before turf, as we couldn't endanger the pitches getting cut up before the weekend's games. With the turf, mid-week soccer and hockey competitions ran throughout the year, providing the club with an outstanding opportunity to attract new players to the club, as well as providing the local community with a facility that encouraged our young people to get outside and take much needed excursive.

Aside from the growth, I talk about the above. The improvement in the sport of hockey was transactive for the game. Gone were the days of slow and ponderous play. The game now is one of the most dynamic and exciting sports to watch, with the surface it is being played on the driving force behind this improvement. As a coach of different sports for the last 25 years, I cannot emphasize how important it is to give every young person the best possible chance of succeeding, and turf does this for field hockey, as well as soccer and lacrosse. Having coached alongside my wife with this year's high school Varsity and JV field hockey teams, I cannot express how bad the surface they train and play on is. To say that it's terrible is an understatement, this is not a blight on the excellent work that the ground staff does, but they are just simply understaffed and lack the resources to make the field even passable to playing reasonable hockey. Seeing freshman girls struggling to stop and pass the ball properly and it not being down to their ability but solely down to the surface is not good enough, and as a community, we must support anything to improve this. I understand that some people think that this will only enhance our varsity teams' access, but as I've stated before, having access to this kind of facility will have far-reaching effects on people's abilities to get out and try sports.

I do hope that this letter resonates with you, and I urge you and your committee to support this program. The vineyard community needs this, and to hinder the development of the islands sporting facilities as a whole would be a tragic mistake.

If you have any questions for me, don't hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely

Andy Nutton