Members of the Martha's Vineyard Commission and Oak Bluffs Planning Board,

I join the chorus of Islanders writing in opposition to the synthetic turf proposed in DRI 352-M4 (the MVRHS Athletic Fields in Oak Bluffs). I also signed a letter of concern submitted by the Field Fund.

Because many other respected Island organizations, town boards and committees, and individuals—among them the Vineyard Conservation Society, the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group, Mass Audubon, and the West Tisbury Conservation Commission—have already written letters detailing the considerable problems that plastic fields present, I won't.

Suffice to say, it is lamentable that this DRI continues to pit Islanders against Islanders, but despite what synthetic turf proponents claim, the world's scientists are in agreement that plastic is harmful to all life on this planet. It needs to be reduced and removed everywhere. It is no longer a safe choice under any circumstance, and its continued use and application worldwide is largely driven by the petroleum industry. There is also ample evidence that recycling of most plastics is a hoax. More plastic is ending up in our oceans and landfills than is ever recycled. Synthetic turf fields are not being recycled in the U.S.—nor are they being shipped to recycling facilities overseas.

It is also fiscally irresponsible to be prioritizing investment in our sports facilities when our educational ones are in greater need—and unrealistic to expect donations to cover the cost of synthetic turf replacement decade after decade (or to cover the cost of a remedy, if the turf installation fails altogether).

And another fundamental question lingers: if a significantly large number of Islanders continues to passionately oppose a DRI such as this one, shouldn't the applicant and other community leaders ask themselves whether it is just to proceed?

Please do not allow a plastic field to be built at MVRHS.

Sincerely,

Lilian Robinson
Tisbury resident, MVRHS graduate, and member of the Tisbury Conservation Commission