

Letter to the editor

Rebekah Thomson <rebekahjthomson@gmail.com>

Tue 1/26/2021 10:35 AM

To: Adam Turner <turner@mvcommission.org>; Alex Elvin <elvin@mvcommission.org>; Lucy Morrison <morrison@mvcommission.org>;
planningboard@oakbluffsma.gov <planningboard@oakbluffsma.gov>;

Cc: The Bena/Doyle Family <molliendoyle@gmail.com>; Dardanella Slavin <dardyslavin@gmail.com>; Rebekah Thomson
<rebekahjthomson@gmail.com>;

Hi Adam, Alex, and the OBPB,

We wanted to share this letter to the editor that we submitted last week. It was published last night — <https://www.mvtimes.com/2021/01/25/field-expert-called-question/>.

Many thanks,
Mollie, Dardy and Rebekah

Last Thursday, in the Martha's Vineyard Commission's first public hearing on the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School's proposal to install a plastic field, engineer Chris Huntress said that in addition to representatives from plastic grass manufacturer TenCate, the MVRHS also had Dr. Laura Green available to address health concerns.

The Field Fund is concerned that the MVRHS would spend money on and rely on someone whose integrity has been questioned by legitimate scientists in their respective fields and who has such a significant track record of defending chemicals widely acknowledged to be harmful.

Four and a half years ago, the island community was warned to *Beware of the Hired Guns*. In a Letter to the Editor in the MV Times, the President of Yale-affiliated Environment and Human Health, Inc. reminded us about industry funded Ph.D.'s such as those paid by the tobacco industry to defend the safety of their products and create an atmosphere of doubt around the science that showed tobacco was harmful to health. She stated, "Every time a town of importance has an argument over the safety of synthetic turf fields, the synthetic turf industry brings us either Michael Peterson or Laura Green to refute parents' fears and to refute the science that shows the fields can present risks to those who play on them."

Indeed, Michael Peterson of Gradient Consulting had recently submitted a Letter to the Editor himself professing the safety of plastic fields. Gradient Consulting has since been featured in Pulitzer-prize winning Center for Public Integrity's article, *Meet the 'Rented White Coats' Who Defend Toxic Chemicals*. "Gradient belongs to a breed of scientific consulting firms that defends the products of its corporate clients beyond credulity, even exhaustively studied substances whose dangers are not in doubt, such as asbestos, lead and arsenic."

For decades, Dr. Green has not only represented the plastic field industry, she has also defended the safety of lead, power plants, formaldehyde, and tire crumb (now known to contain a chemical that is responsible for the decimation of the coho salmon population in Puget Sound). Considering the island has decided to not use tire crumb infill specifically because of the health and environmental concerns associated with it, it is unclear why the high school would spend taxpayer dollars to hire someone who has defended it for years.

As early as 2007, scientists were questioning her expertise. In the International Journal of Occupational Environmental Health (2007; 13:107-117), Dr. James Huff of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences included Dr. Green in a list of 16 experts who are hired by industry "to support their position; however tenuous and speculative, to endorse their products, and to explain and downplay the risks to government and in public forums."

From what we can find, Dr. Green does not appear to be an independent or objective scientist nor will she lend credibility to the high school's proposal. To the contrary, her involvement is another reminder that there is a multi-billion dollar industry behind these products.

Mollie Doyle, Dardanella Slavin, Rebekah Thomson

<https://www.mvtimes.com/2016/05/18/beware-hired-guns/>

<https://www.mvtimes.com/2016/05/11/consider-the-science/>

<https://publicintegrity.org/environment/meet-the-rented-white-coats-who-defend-toxic-chemicals/>

<https://greentoxicology.com/resume/LauraGreenCV.pdf>

<https://concordma.gov/documentcenter/view/710>

<http://new.medwaycable.com:5858/vod/1315-ExcelonPresentation102115-Medium-v1.mp4> (time stamps: 4:55, 1:59:00)

<http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/Common/ViewDoc.aspx?DocRefId=%7B5C08807A-9AEF-4861-86ED-17BA8ED02916%7D>

<https://www.shawsportsturf.com/performance-safety/>

https://www.syntheticurfCouncil.org/resource/resmgr/Files/Rubberecycle_-_Dr._Green_let.pdf

<https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/artificial-turf-debate/feds-wont-say-if-artificial-turf-safe-kids-n435731>

<http://files.leagueathletics.com/Images/Club/2074/Dr.%20Laura%20Green%20-%20Executive%20Summary%20-SBR%5B3%5D.pdf>

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/tire-dust-is-killing-salmon/>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312539251_Industry_Influence_on_Occupational_and_Environmental_Public_Health