

**JoAnn and Jack Fruchtman
42 Hebrons Way
Aquinnah, MA 02535**

February 20, 2021

Martha's Vineyard Commission
33 New York Avenue
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Re: DRI 352-M4 MVRHS Athletic Fields

Dear Members of the MVC,

This testimony is a follow-up to our January 13 submission. Once again, we would like to reiterate that we are residents of Aquinnah. We respectfully urge MVC to deny approval of the installation of artificial turf on the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School athletic fields.

We think it is imperative that the school board invest in natural grass on these fields for both the safety of the athletes and the general public. We were inspired by Dr. Sarah-Jeanne Royer's recent testimony, dated February 4, that she gave before the Commission (<https://www.mvcommission.org/sites/default/files/docs/Sarah-Jeanne%20Royer%20presentation%202021-2-4%20%28reduced%29.pdf>).

Dr. Royer is a respected oceanographer with a particular interest in how greenhouse gases are emitted from plastics, including the proposed surface of the fields. She re-emphasized the deleterious effects of artificial turf that she wrote in an *MV Times* commentary just a year ago: (see <https://www.mvtimes.com/2019/02/20/synthetic-turf-will-contribute-greenhouse-gas-problems/>).

Dr. Royer noted in February 2020 that her research has demonstrated that artificial turf is dangerous: "Given that most plastic carpets are made out of polyethylene--the plastic found to release these gases at the highest rate--and given the high surface area occupied by this material, including each individual blade of plastic 'grass,' synthetic turf likely contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions."

In her *Times* piece, she commended the work of the community to restrict the use of plastics, thus reducing the dangers to humans and the climate that they bring. As she put it, "I applaud the Island's efforts to ban plastic grocery bags, plastic straws, helium balloons, and now plastic bottles (all made with LPDE), and urge you to demonstrate that same leadership regarding synthetic turf." LPDE is low-density polyethylene plastic.

Once again, we respectfully urge the commissioners to reject the request to install artificial turf. The grass field alternative can only be significantly beneficial to the environment and to the children at the high school. In addition, as Dr. Royer suggests, we certainly want the best for the Martha's Vineyard community. Once again, we thank you for allowing us to express our concerns.

Sincerely yours,

JoAnn Fruchtman

Jack Fruchtman