

Doug Ruskin
PO Box 1185
West Tisbury, MA 02575
doug.ruskin@gmail.com

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Via Electronic Mail

Martha's Vineyard Commission
PO Box 1447
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Re: Martha's Vineyard Regional High School
DRI-352-M4/2020

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to urge you to not permit the use of an artificial turf field in the new proposed High School athletic project. I ask you to review and if necessary, further validate the testimony of Jerad Minnick that natural grass fields can be installed and maintained to a level satisfactory to the High School's proposed use. Should you decide to approve the project, and that testimony proves valid, I ask that you condition the project to require 100% natural grass fields be incorporated.

For decades, the world used DDT as an insecticide – until we learned better. We used lead pipes to carry water – until we learned better. We used CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) as refrigerants – until we learned better. There are numerous additional products with similar stories. You have heard expert testimony regarding the possible side-effects of an artificial turf field. I need not enumerate them here, but the point is, no one really knows for sure – and therefore, why even take a chance if a well-known, viable, safe (and cheaper) alternative is readily available?

My prior spoken testimony (accompanied here; the spoken testimony was not verbatim) focused on the significant financial unknowns faced by the community if this project is approved as presented. I reiterate that argument here, and ask that you either determine definitively what those on-going expenses will really be or delay approval until those figures are truly known.

But regardless, there is no good reason the broader community should have to worry about the – largely unknown - long-term side-effects of artificial turf on Martha's Vineyard.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

Sincerely



Doug Ruskin
West Tisbury