

Written Testimony: MVRHS Proposed Sports Complex

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To: Alex Elvin <elvin@mvccommission.org>; planningboard@oakbluffsma.gov <planningboard@oakbluffsma.gov>;

Dear MVC and Oak Bluffs Planning Board,

I would like to inform you of my strong opposition to the proposed plastic field at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School. I graduated from MVRHS in 2016 and went on to receive my Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies at the University of Vermont. I decided to pursue this field of study because of the incredible impact my childhood on Martha's Vineyard had on me. I was exposed to the natural world in such a unique way, as we all are on the Vineyard. My island upbringing allowed me to experience the natural world in its full force, through the changing seasons and over the years.

As an environmental studies student, it became apparent to me how impactful planning decisions are on the environment and on the humans who interact with both the natural and built world around them. The proposed plan threatens to harm the sensitive ecosystems that we all benefit from on Martha's Vineyard. What makes students unique when they graduate from MVRHS is that they are able to find a deep sense of place in nature and that they can see before their eyes how humans impact the environment.

I hope that you will set a precedent for our island community by putting the community and the environment that we love first, knowing that this will create the most benefit for both sides of this discussion. In the fall I will start a master's program in urban and regional planning. I thank you for your diligent work on overseeing this matter and I hope to continue to be able to look to you for inspiration as I begin my career. I want to feel proud of my home community and the tough decisions that were made in pursuit of a better future for MVRHS students and island residents for generations to come. Please consider how this proposed project will affect humans (particularly folks of color and minority communities who shoulder the brunt of the impact of climate change and environmental injustice) and the sensitive island ecosystem as you make the decision whether or not to incorporate more plastic into our environment.

Sincerely,
Maisie Jarrell