

Comments, DRI 352-MV MVRHS Athletic Fields

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To: Alex Elvin <elvin@mvcommission.org>; Lucy Morrison <morrison@mvcommission.org>; Adam Turner <turner@mvcommission.org>;
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January 14, 2021

MV Commission RE: DRI 352-M4 MVRHS Athletic Fields

January 14, 2021

Dear MV Commissioners,

Thank you for allowing me to comment and express my opposition to DRI #352-M4, MVRHS Athletic Fields.

Wealthy donors are funding a community facility that in some ways green-washes what is clearly not an environmentally sensitive project.

Recycling these toxic materials is not viable – Ask Europe & please read my attachments below as well as VCS's testimony for details.

Micro plastics - these faux grass blades - have a negative impact on human health, water quality, wildlife and the ecosystem as a whole. And they do not break down. They are "forever chemicals". MA DEP is starting to regulate these pollutants because they pose great risks to human health and the natural environment.

The Chemical Industry is a Goliath. US law in this case is such that until a chemical is proven harmful, it's just fine to use it. Nondisclosure is another keyword. Industry does not have to make public all of the chemicals used in a product. We do know that some form of PFOAs, often slightly altered to evade EPA scrutiny, are in this artificial grass. Teflon pans are out of fashion for good reason. The most toxic component of Teflon are PFOAs which are also used in flame retardants. Wells have been contaminated by PFOAs here on MV near the airport - https://mvyairport.com/wp-content/uploads/MVY_Phase_I_ISI_FINAL_noAppD-2019-11-20.pdf . PFOAs are an intrinsic component of artificial turf.

This brings up the other Goliath - The EPA. Even without the obstructionism of the Trump Administration, the EPA has always had its limits. In the case of toxic chemicals that the EPA regulates, as mentioned above, the industry will change the chemical just enough so it slips through the EPA guidelines. Round-up is still on the market even though the EPA is aware of the health hazards of glyphosate, the main toxin in this common herbicide. Last summer, the EPA acknowledged that synthetic turf contains chemicals which have been proven to cause cancer, but they have yet to complete a full risk assessment. In fact, they missed their own deadline.

The MVC has the power to go beyond EPA regulations, to both assess and limit the risks. Vineyard Golf, an organic golf course approved by the MVC after much controversy, is the prime example of how well the MVC can serve our community. Sadly, with regard to the well meaning proponents of this project, I don't think the MVC can compromise in this case. Grow grass. Protect our children, our health, water, wildlife and aquaculture. Protect our turf. Vote No.

I appreciate your consideration, and thank you for any and all of your efforts to protect our Island.

With regards,

Megan Ottens-Sargent
Aquinnah, MA

Further reading, which I would like to include in my comments:

https://www.salemnews.com/news/local_news/state-limits-forever-chemicals-in-drinking-water/article_94ab5199-acd5-5d44-9f29-8b875e903d9b.html

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/pfas-synthetic-chemicals-water-toxic/>

<https://www.seacoastonline.com/story/news/2020/06/13/citizens-group-says-test-shows-pfas-in-phs-athletic-field/113739436/>

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2019/10/09/toxic-chemicals-found-blades-artificial-turf/1mIVxXjzCAqRahwgXtfy6K/story.html>

<https://www.ewg.org/childrenshealth/22912/new-studies-show-pfas-artificial-grass-blades-and-backing#:~:text=PFAS%20chemicals%20are%20found%20in,are%20known%20to%20cause%20cancer.>

<https://theintercept.com/2019/10/08/pfas-chemicals-artificial-turf-soccer/>

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