From: Pamela Benjamin
To: Oak Bluffs Planning Board
Subject: Dear Planning Board, Letter about PFAS
Date: Thursday, March 31, 2022 12:04:06 PM
Importance: High

Dear Oak Bluffs Planning Board,

We are writing to you today because our family is very concerned about the possibility of having plastic grass or chemical grass, AKA artificial turf on the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School fields. Just knowing that there are all those PFAS and other chemicals in plastic grass is bone chilling and worrisome, and this does not include the toxic chemicals that will be used to clean the plastic and the pesticides and chemical weed killers that will be used to eliminate the plants that grow through it... according to articles that I have read. (see below) We have three grandsons in the high school at this time who love and play high school sports. Our whole family is very anxious about this prospect, it goes against every environmental and ecologically conscious concept and also everything that our beautiful island of Martha's Vineyard stands for. We are extremely concerned about the possibility of every high school student who plays sports, playing on those toxic fields and also every other island or off island child or adult who will use the playing fields. We played sports when we were in High School and were thrilled to be out of the institutional school building running, sitting on, touching, smelling and feeling the Living and Breathing blades of grass under our feet. It was a very enriching, poignant and healing experience that we hope will always be offered to our MVRHS and island students.

All the information in these articles below are very easy to access online. Please make sure you choose articles that are published by highly rated and trusted environmental organizations and medical experts.

The wise words of Kahlil Gibran:

"But I say, not in sleep but in the overwakefulness of noontide, that the wind speaks not more sweetly to the giant oaks than to the least of all the blades of grass;"

And Walt Whitman:

"This is what you shall do; Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches.....read these leaves in the open air every season of every year of your life..... dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body."

And Brian Ingalls: "Grass is the forgiveness of nature -
her constant benediction.
Forests decay, harvests perish, flowers vanish,
but grass is immortal."

We doubt if Kahlil Gibran, Walt Whitman or Brian Ingalls were referring to plastic grass.

Thank you all so much for your service to our community and all that you do. We are confident that you have our students' best interests and the interests of the health and wellbeing of our beautiful island first and foremost in mind.

Thank you so much for reading this letter and the articles below.

Wishing you all the best, Pam and Nat Benjamin

https://www.ewg.org/childrenshealth/22912/new-studies-show-pfas-artificial-grass-blades-and-backing (Environmental Working Group EWG)

PEER and the Ecology Center tested eight different samples of turf. They all tested positive for total fluorine, which suggests the presence of PFAS. PFAS are used in the manufacturing process to make the turf blades pliable enough for extrusion. The organizations tested for 36 types of PFAS, but there may be many other PFAS in synthetic grass.

There are between 12,000 and 13,000 artificial fields in use in the U.S. The turf and infill of a single deconstructed field weighs about 44,000 pounds. There are also many fields no longer in active use. Fields need to be replaced every 8 to 10 years, according to the Synthetic Turf Council, with between 1,200 and 1,500 fields being replaced at any given time.

https://www.ecocenter.org/toxic-forever-chemicals-infest-artificial-turf

***Washington, DC* — "The toxic chemicals used in fire retardants and non-stick cookware have been found in artificial turf carpet, according to Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) and The Ecology Center. This raises new public health and environmental concerns, including the potential of these chemicals to leach from turf fields into nearby waters. "**

"Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are called "forever chemicals" because they do not break down in the environment and bio-accumulate in the food chain. Human exposures to PFAS are associated with cancer, birth defects, and other impairments. <u>Massachusetts is poised to implement a ground water and drinking water standard of 20 ppt for six PFAS, individually or combined. " !!</u>

***** Here is more information (link below) about the groundwater standard in Massachusetts.**

https://www.natlawreview.com/article/massachusetts-finalizes-drinking-water-standard-pfas

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