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Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 10:17 AM

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Subject: If you don't know, say 'no' to \$1,100,000 for Wootton HS Artificial turf supplemental
appropriation today

Dear County Councilmembers:

If you don't know whether artificial turf fields pose environmental or health risks to your constituents, you must vote 'NO'. Your packet for today's vote on a \$1,100,000 supplemental appropriation for the installation of a single artificial turf playing field at Wootton High School is missing the science previously provided to you and your staff (one example is shown in SHPFC -WOOTON HS Health and Safety Jan 15 2013 testimony on Artificial turf appropriation.pdf) on the PAHs and other carcinogens known to exist in tire crumb and plastic grass blades of artificial turf fields. There is no mention that other municipalities are paying far less for the same fields. Your 40 page packet does include a 19 page industry marketing packet from the vendor, Field Turf, who will reap the rewards from laying a plastic rug over the earth in the name of more playing time. Troubling to say the least.

http://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=6&event_id=841&meta_id=44988

There is no mention of the funding source for ongoing maintenance required to meet the vendor warranty (including grooming and sanitization to reduce the microbes from blood, sweat and animal feces left on the field) nor the more than \$750,000 replacement costs in 8 or so years when the fields have broken down and need a new plastic carpet. What happens if Wootton, like Richard Montgomery High School recently has, loses its private soccer club funding? Who will pay? And if you decide you should go back to nature, the undocumented cost to remove all the gravel and artificial turf will fall to whom? **If you don't know, you must vote 'NO'.**

What is wrong with the natural turf field currently in place at Wootton? Who pays for the repairs to the synthetic turf field if Wootton undergoes renovations in the near term? How much would it cost to invest in natural turf instead of a plastic, toxic rug? **If you don't know, you must vote 'NO'.**

Page 12 of your packet notes the following from Superintendent Starr's request:

The second issue was related to the use of crumb rubber for the infield mix and a concern that there are harmful effects if swallowed. This issue recently was researched jointly by staff from Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the County Council, and the Montgomery County Recreation Department and determined that there was no data to support this concern.

To what joint research is this referring? Does it too discount the science on the PAHs and other carcinogens known to exist in tire crumb and plastic grass blades? **If you don't know, you must vote 'NO'.**

In 2009 the County Council approved a special appropriation for Walter Johnson High School with a caveat that has yet to be enacted:

The Education Committee unanimously recommends approval of this appropriation, with the understanding that the Council will conduct further review of environmental and health safety monitoring options that may be appropriate for artificial turf athletic fields in the County.

Over two years later, the [September 2011 Montgomery County Artificial Turf Staff Group Report](#) admitted,

In the absence of either an environmental impact assessment or a health impact assessment on the installation and use of artificial turf fields, the Staff Work Group identified some of the areas of potential human risks that were raised during the compilation of information that forms this report. This is not a complete set of risks. A formal process would be required to identify and examine all the human health risks from all the artificial turf field materials under consideration. Such an analysis was beyond the scope and capacity of the Artificial Turf Staff Work Group.

Where is the analysis you yourselves have called for in the past? If you know, please share. **If you don't know, you must vote 'NO'.**

And lastly, page 40 of your packet makes this note:

Finding: Many owners, installers, and suppliers of artificial turf fields believe that crumb rubber is the best Infill product on the market because it has been field tested and proven for performance, is readily available, utilizes recycled material, and is cost-effective over a number of years. Alternative infill materials are being marketed primarily to compete with crumb rubber, based on the negative perceptions attributed to SBR. While some of the alternative infills may show promise in terms of durability and performance over time, Parks and MCPS staff believe it is too early to invest in an unproven product until a greater track record is established for many of these materials.

No mention of the environmental or health concerns. What about the children and adults recreating on these fields? Who is looking out for their well being? What about the aquatic life having zinc drained into their habitat? **If you don't know, you must vote 'NO'.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Gail Dalferes

Kensington, MD resident and member of the Safe Healthy Playing Fields Coalition

(www.safehealthyplayingfields.org)