



SIERRA CLUB
NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

Advocacy in Action

Taylor McFarland, Conservation Program Manager

Passing an Ordinance or Resolution

- Research
- Lobbying
- Communication
- Partnering with organizations/experts to support your cause

Artificial Turf Ordinance Resolution



Research

- Find local precedent
 - **Milburn, NJ:** Resolution urging the Millburn Township Committee and Board of Education to cease funding synthetic turf field projects and to prioritize investing in safe, non-toxic, natural grass playing fields for recreational development projects.
 - **Boston, Massachusetts:** Banned synthetic grass in parks.
 - **Cape May, New Jersey:** Adopted an ordinance (531-2024) in April 2024 banning artificial turf for landscaping.
 - **Massachusetts Towns:** Sharon, Wayland, and Concord have implemented bans or moratoriums.

Research

- State Legislation (passed into law/introduced)
 - Utilize language for ordinance/resolution
 - Take special attention to how definitions are defined
- NJ Legislature Website: <https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>

Research

- Utilizing all of the research and data
 - EC needs to make a position and criteria/recommendations for the council
 - Draft a formal letter from the EC to send to council
 - Create a report for the council and interested residents
 - Use content for communications (petition, social media, LTE, etc.)

Lobbying

- Get to know your councilmembers
- Research what issues they are interested in and supported in the past
 - Tie it into the artificial turf ban campaign
 - Budget
 - Environment
 - Public Health
 - Impacts to Children
 - Injuries
- Schedule a meeting with them for a in depth discussion
 - Bring in experts that help your case, e.g sports field manager

How to Lobby

- **NJ Sierra Club example with state legislator**
 - Research bills they have sponsored, committees they chair or sit on
 - Prep meeting a day before to go over the agenda
- **Adapt during the meeting**
 - Give them the opportunity to speak first to discuss their perspective
- **Observe, read the room**
 - Move on to the next point if the legislator, councilmember seems disinterested
- **Be efficient with your time**
- **Make sure to keep notes and follow up**

How to Testify

- **Schedule an organizing call with commissioners, interested residents, experts before hearing**
 - Health and Safety Arguments
 - Environmental Impact Arguments
 - Financial Arguments
 - What other towns/states are doing
- **During hearing**
 - **Coordinate the "Wave":** Have 10 people speak on 10 different technical issues (one on plastic, one on heat, one on cost, etc.) rather than 10 people saying "I don't like it".
 - **Be Specific and Evidence-Based:** Vague statements like "I care about the environment" carry little weight. Use facts like "Artificial turf compared to natural grass can be 20-70 degrees hotter than natural grass."
 - **Propose Solutions:** Instead of just opposing, offer constructive alternatives

Communication

- **Grassroots building**
 - Create a petition: <https://actionnetwork.org/>
 - Work with an organization w/ large membership to create petition for you
 - Work with interested residents (grassroots)
 - Educational event/ in-person or virtual
 - Tie in an action piece

Communication

- **Grasstops**
 - Organize an educational webinar w/ experts to help your case and invite major decision makers (grasstops)
 - Work to get state legislators to weigh in and put pressure on the council

Communication

- **Letters to the editor, OpEd, press releases**
 - Local TAPinto
 - Patch
 - NJ Star Ledger
 - Bergen Record
 - Asbury Park Press
 - New Jersey Monitor
 - Press of AC
 - Associated Press
 - Politico

Communication

- Flyers
 - QR Code of petition
- Stickers/ Pins
- Social Media
 - Info Graphics
 - Social Media Campaign
 - Tie in link to petition
- Utilize Earth Day Events



Free services to create flyers, posters, graphics: Canva & Adobe Express



Say NO to Artificial Turf

WHAT IS ARTIFICIAL TURF?

Artificial turf is a surface made up of synthetic materials often as a substitute for natural grass, and is commonly used for playing fields, sporting events, and recreational activities. It is composed of three layers, the synthetic grass blades, a backing into which the blades are sewn, and the infill dispersed across the plastic that helps to keep the blades upright. The turf is created with plastic fibers made from nylon, polypropylene, and polyethylene and the infill material is commonly made from recycled tires (also referred to as crumb rubber).

ALTERNATIVES:

- Alternatives to synthetic turf include different types of natural grasses that grow short, with deeper roots. Natural grass is clean, allows water to infiltrate into the ground, is safer for players.
- Safe Playgrounds: (EWF) engineered wood fiber, Sand. Children who play on soil have 10x lower risk of cancer than those who play on used tire crumb.

GET INVOLVED:

Join the fight for safe playing fields and playgrounds! Interested in learning how to get more involved? Email our Conservation Program Manager, Taylor McFarland at Taylor.McFarland@sierraclub.org



<https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey>



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IMPACTS:

PUBLIC HEALTH



- Exposure to dangerous and toxic carcinogens: PFAS or forever chemicals, and plastics in crumb rubber.
- Artificial turf becomes much hotter than natural grass, capable of reaching temperatures of 110 to 180 degrees F. This raises the risk of life-threatening heat-related illnesses (dehydration, heat stroke, heat exhaustion, can lead to turf burns or abrasions) for athletes and other users, and increases water usage to cool down the field.
- On top of heat-related health concerns, artificial turf poses a choking hazard from the small pieces of crumb rubber.

ENVIRONMENT



- Loss of wildlife and natural habitat.
- Contaminated runoff and Water Quality: Turf sheds the synthetic materials and microplastics down into water and surrounding environment.
- The artificial turf field needs to be replaced every 8-10 years, however they are not recyclable and end up in landfills or are dumped illegally.
- Contributes to Climate Change: A number of studies have measured higher temperatures on artificial turf than in surrounding buildings and streets, which contributes to the heat island effect and emits methane (which is a greenhouse gas).

FUNDING



- We encourage state and local government decision-makers to invest in grass-based playing fields wherever possible.
- Programs like the Green Acres Fund should not be spending money on artificial turf.



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Artificial turf also poses a choking hazard from the small pieces of crumb rubber.



SUPPORT NATURAL GRASS, NOT FAKE TOXIC TURF

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 **sierraclub_nj**
🎵 Pete Seeger · Green Grass Grows All Around

No Green Acres Funding for Toxic Artificial Turf!

The Green Acres Program is funding environmentally harmful artificial turf instead of preserving land and supporting sustainable recreation.

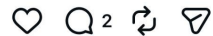
Tell your Senator to support S3254 to ensure Green Acres funds are not spent on more plastic, toxic carpets across NJ!

sc.org/nofunds4turf



View insights

Boost post



See all comments

February 10

Partner with organization to help support your cause

- What kind of support do you need?
 - Grassroots?
 - Experts?

Patience Relationship Building Education



Questions?

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Thank you

For further questions, please reach out to:

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