MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Prohibiting the use of Crumb Rubber Surfaces on State & Municipal Property

HB 5249- An Act Prohibiting the Purchase and Use of Artificial Turf by the State and Municipalities

BACKGROUND

Crumb rubber is a term for shredded tire rubber used in manufacturing rubber surfacing, rubber mulch, and other infills commonly used on school and public playgrounds and athletic fields. This material is made from scrap tires, which are manufactured using an array of toxic chemicals, including certain heavy metals and known human carcinogens. The Empire State Consumer Project examined several samples of crumb rubber and rubber mulch as part of its 2015 Children’s Products Safety Report, and identified high levels of arsenic and cadmium in that rubber, among other chemicals of concern.

Children are disproportionately at risk to the adverse health effects associated with these toxins due to their small size, rapidly growing bodies, and developing immune systems. While more research is needed to fully understand the impacts that long-term exposure to these materials can have on children’s health, available science indicates that there is a significant cause for concern, and that the use of crumb rubber around developing children should be avoided wherever possible.

JUSTIFICATION

In response to the emerging health and safety concerns related to crumb rubber, localities across the U.S. and around the world have taken action by prohibiting the use of recycled tire crumb including Sweden, the NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation, the City of Hartford and the town of Westport, CT. Based on the growing body of available science and experience gained through years of observing artificial turf fields in use, it is clear that artificial turf fields and playground surfacing made with crumb rubber pose an undue risk to the health of small children, and should be avoided wherever possible.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

- No municipality, school district or department of the State shall enter into any contract for the installation and use of artificial turf fields.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

- The definition of artificial turf field should be expanded to include any structure constructed with crumb rubber, including playground surfacing and recycled rubber mulch.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS HB 5249- AN ACT PROHIBITING ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELDS ON STATE & MUNICIPAL PROPERTY

Citizens Campaign for the Environment is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment.

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