

COMMENT on Lucchesi Park Multi-Use Synthetic Turf Field
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ParksnRec

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I am writing to urge you to reject the staff's recommendation for Lucchesi Park Multi-Use Synthetic Turf Field -I will focus my remarks on the health implications of exposure to heat, chemicals and micro plastics. As a Registered Nurse with a PhD who has worked for the last 5 years in the area of Environmental Health, focusing on children, I am compelled to urge you to not add another plastic heat island to Petaluma Parks first and foremost for the sake of children's health and safety. Climate change and extreme heat has added to the myriad of man made environmental dangers children are exposed to as well as thousands of chemicals.

Our state legislature is taking action to protect children and the environment for example:

The following statement is taken from the CA State Leg Analyst re: SB 499 (having passed the Senate and being heard in Assembly Approps today), known as "the cool schools" is among the 3 bills being considered in the state legislature this year dealing with artificial turf aka plastic grass. "According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, children are more susceptible to extreme heat. This is because: "Physical characteristics – Children have a smaller body mass to surface area ratio than adults, making them more vulnerable to heat-related morbidity and mortality. Children are more likely to become dehydrated than adults because they can lose more fluid quickly... with extreme heat being particularly damaging and larger effects for low income and minority students." Implementing a heat plan could help alleviate inequities in student outcome and child development.

SB 676 Drought Tolerant landscaping prohibits incentivising the use of artificial turf (plastic grass) in rebates. The town of Windsor has already done this because plastic grass contributes through greenhouse gases and heat islands to climate change.

AB 1423 up in Senate Approps next week which has passed the Assembly, deals with the prohibiting the manufacture and sale of artificial turf which contains PFAS in California because PFAS is one of many chemicals used in the production of artificial turf. Scientific studies have shown that exposure to some

PFAS (a class of thousands of chemicals characterized by their chemical composition and which are described as “forever chemicals” because of their resistance to breakdown in the human body and in nature) may be linked to harmful health effects in humans and animals. In kids in particular, the CDC warns that PFAS decreases the effectiveness of the immune response provided by vaccinations. Longitudinal studies link the accumulation of PFAS in the body to thyroid, liver, cancer, and reproductive system harm. During production, use, and disposal, PFAS can migrate into the soil, water, and air and infect drinking water sources. AB 1423 additionally requires manufacturers of “covered surfaces” to use the least toxic alternative when replacing PFAS in a “covered surface” and requires that those manufacturers conduct their analysis to determine the least toxic alternative in compliance with the requirements of the Green Chemistry Act. This existing Act is overseen by the CA Department of Toxic Substances and Chemicals which has designated two product categories that contain PFAS as “Priority Products”: carpets and rugs and certain surface treatments. A Priority Product is a consumer product identified by DTSC that contains one or more Candidate Chemicals and that has the potential to contribute to significant or widespread adverse impacts to humans or the environment. Manufacturers of a Priority Product must submit certain documentation regarding their product to DTSC and submit an alternatives analysis or they can remove the product for sale in California or remove or replace the chemical of concern. DTSC has proposed evaluating artificial turf with PFAS in its 2021-2023 Priority Product Work Plan, and previously proposed investigating PFAS in other product categories, such as food packaging and children’s products.

Much research has been done regarding the cushioning infill that has been used in plastic grass focusing on crumb rubber which contains cyanide lead and other harmful chemicals which wash off the fields. (into the surrounding environment and habitats) I understand the Lucchesi Fields proposal uses other UNTESTED infill which is attached with manufactured and UNTESTED chemicals. Unlike real turf, artificial turf lacks natural shock absorption. The cushioning infill wears out over time and research has documented increased bone injuries, abrasions, and joint strains. Gopher holes can be prevented before installation of real turf, breakdown of infill cushioning cannot.

Soccer is a popular sport and it’s great that kids love to play. When kids play they breathe fast and hard inhaling dangerous chemicals and micro plastic, when they fall on HOT plastic they can burn themselves, and they get abrasions that

absorb chemicals, when fields are hot an extra strain is put on their cardio vascular system and they suffer heat related illness.

Our kids deserve safe places to play and plastic fields are not safe. All of our kids (especially kids from under resourced neighborhoods) deserve safe playing fields.

From a climate change perspective, I have been proud that Petaluma has led the nation in banning gas stations – and hopefully the demand for fossil fuels.

So why select PLASTIC turf when in California throughout and the country children of color are more likely to live in neighborhoods adversely affected by fossil fuel production whether it's families of color in Kern County and LA or closer to home in Richmond. Fossil fuel extraction and petrochemical production is associated with acute and long-term pulmonary illnesses, cancer, and stillbirth and premature delivery. What does this have to do with Lucchesi Park? Plastic grass perpetuates the demand for fossil fuel – plastics are made from fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are the main contributor to Climate Change. Please keep Petaluma values at the forefront in your decision making.

May you be well,

c.

Catherine Dodd PhD, RN FAAN she/her

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