

Communication from Public

Name: Christine Lenches-Hinkel

Date Submitted: 09/17/2024 08:46 AM

Council File No: 24-0602

Comments for Public Posting: Hello, My name is Christine Lenches-Hinkel and I am an organics and soils specialist deeply committed to sustainable practices. I am here to comment on the growing trend of municipalities investing in artificial turf when more sustainable and cost effective alternatives exist. As an Environmental Planner by profession turned organic waste management expert, I would like to share some insights into artificial turf from this lens having conducted my fair share of environmental impact analysis on various park improvement projects. The Mirage of Water Savings: Artificial turf is often marketed as a water-saving solution, particularly in drought-prone regions like California. However, this narrative oversimplifies the issue. While it can be argued that synthetic grass doesn't require regular irrigation, in fact, it still does.... to keep it cool, to clean it, to make it and to dispose of it . . The Call for Environmental Impact Analysis: Drawing from my extensive experience as an environmental planner, analyst, and scientist, I urge city council to conduct a proper impact analysis under CEQA comparing plastic turf grass with the sustainable alternative...that being natural turf. Such an assessment should draw upon science that provide support for either alternative AND discloses impacts related to energy consumption, water use, heat inducing potential, greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration and overall healthy and safety of sensitive users. Without such an analysis or public disclosure of impacts, the City may run the risk of not meeting its Climate Action Plan goals, violating the law under CEQA and exposing itself to litigation. Our city's resources—both natural and financial—are too valuable to merely assume what manufacturers of plastic products are telling us. It is falsely assumed that artificial turf ensures more playtime for our children. If either the plastic turf or the ambient temperature gets too hot, there would likely be no playtime at all! This would not necessarily be the case with natural turf. Natural turf has a cooling effect and can draw down greenhouse gases from the local airshed and thereby cooling the local microclimate. This would also help the City meet its Climate Action goals. Without a CEQA review to disclose both adverse and positive impacts from investing in either alternative, there may be legal consequences due to non-disclosure of impacts to the public. Health, Safety, and

Liability: Artificial turf raises health and safety concerns as well. What chemicals are leaching from it? How does it affect air quality? And what about the heat it absorbs? Parents deserve transparency. They should know the risks their children face while playing on synthetic surfaces. Some level of CEQA analysis is required. The Sustainable Alternative: Natural Turf without Chemical Fertilizers: Instead of blindly investing in artificial turf, let's consider a more holistic approach. Natural turf, managed responsibly, can provide recreational opportunities without compromising health or the environment. It certainly would help avoid the high cost of litigation. I want to assure the City Council that alternatives to plastic turf grass do exist and can be planned for immediately. Golf courses in our own state like McInnis Golf Course manages its turf grass without chemicals and is saving on water and other maintenance costs. Professional ballfields like Oracle Park are managing their natural turf grass with AI technology to achieve lower irrigation and maintenance costs and higher turf performance. The EPA has several case studies documenting upwards of 30% water savings with natural turf grass when managed with organic inputs like compost. In conclusion, I strongly urge City Council to suspend all investments in artificial turf grass and ensure that the alternative selected actually aligns with the city's Climate Action Plan and Heat Emergency Plan. This would ultimately reduce the City's potential liability under CEQA and put it on a path towards meeting its climate action goals.

Communication from Public

Name: Stephanie Bartron

Date Submitted: 09/17/2024 10:48 AM

Council File No: 24-0602

Comments for Public Posting: I urge you all to vote in favor of this motion. Please stop the installation of this single-use-plastic product, artificial turf, and prevent the future replacement of it on existing city properties (including schools and parks). Protect the city from future lawsuits by soccer goalies and football players from the PFA cancers linked to plastic athletic fields. Protect our oceans from the microplastic waste this produces throughout its installation and after. Protect our air and watersheds from the toxic chemicals that leach from it. And understand the true costs associated with these products, including their regular replacement and landfill disposal, which can be required after just 10 years. As a garden designer, and as the Sustainability Chair of the Greater Los Angeles District of Professional Garden Designers, I also ask that you model environmental responsibility to our citizens. I have been removing, reducing, and replacing lawns for over 25 years now, not with plastic grass but with living plants and healthy soil. At first, clients worried what their neighbors would think. Then their neighbors quietly complimented them for "being brave" and removing the lawns. Now, general public opinion has shifted, and removing unused lawns is a common request. But people also see the gravel-scapes and cactus that some have installed, and ask about that. Lately, this has changed, and the demonization of thirsty lawns has resulted in larger installations of artificial turf. I've had 2 of these removed this year, so far, totaling several thousand square feet of plastic trash sent to our landfills. Approving this measure and publicly condemning the use of artificial turf, as well as adding a future rebate for its residential replacement, will help to raise public awareness about these problems, and to stem future residential installations. I also want to thank you all for your continued respect of and investment in Los Angeles' blue, green, and brown infrastructure. With the Biodiversity Project, urban tree canopy assessment and planting, building electrification, and other LA Green New Deal projects, Los Angeles is leading the world towards a more resilient future. Artificial turf has no part in that, it is literally just greenwashing. Healthy living plants and soil produce oxygen and cool and clean our air and waters. Plastic grass does none of this. And while it may technically be permeable, the dry compacted dirt below it is in no condition to absorb or retain stormwater. Plants and soil

cycle water, they do not "waste" it. Yes, we can be more responsible in how we manage water use, and supplies, throughout our city. But living plants should be part of these solutions and calculations. Further, plastic grass does nothing to support our biodiversity, unlike living plants, even living turf grass. Green infrastructure also has been scientifically proven to improve overall quality of life and even to reduce crime rates. We need living plants, including trees and, sometimes, living grass lawns. For our public health, our local biodiversity, our resilience, and our children, I urge you to pass this measure today without hesitation or significant revision. Thank you!

Communication from Public

Name: David Wolfberg
Date Submitted: 09/17/2024 10:55 AM
Council File No: 24-0602

Comments for Public Posting: Council Members, I am the son of the late George Wolfberg, a 40+ year soccer referee, retired Chief Administrative Analyst and the city employee who wrote both the bid to earn Los Angeles the honor of hosting the 1984 Olympics. He added women's road biking to the contract and since then, women's cycling has been a keystone to the Olympic Games (and we should consider celebrating this in 2028). I am writing to endorse the recommendations of the ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT relative to the health and environmental risks from polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and other contaminants, the transition away from use of synthetic turf or artificial grass, transition towards California drought-friendly landscaping, and related matters. This report makes it clear that we are aware of the environmental issues with artificial grass / astroturf. I am submitting this comment, a bit late but at least for the file, in case there has been heavy astroturf lobbying in favor of maintaining these materials on athletic fields. I ask that you add this NIH study (entitled "Lower Extremity Injury Rates on Artificial Turf Versus Natural Grass Playing Surfaces: A Systematic Review") to the council file:
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35593739/> Reviewing 53 articles published over 48 years, it concludes that Astroturf is a destroyer of joints. Excerpts: "When individual anatomic injury locations were analyzed, the greatest proportion of articles reported a higher foot and ankle injury rate on artificial turf compared with natural grass, both with old-generation (3/4 articles) and new-generation (9/19 articles) turf. Similar knee and hip injury rates were reported between playing surfaces for soccer athletes on new-generation turf, but football players, particularly those at high levels of competition, were more likely to sustain a knee injury on artificial turf than on natural grass." "Conclusion: The available body of literature suggests a higher rate of foot and ankle injuries on artificial turf, both old-generation and new-generation turf, compared with natural grass... Only a few articles in the literature reported a higher overall injury rate on natural grass compared with artificial turf, and all of these studies received financial support from the artificial turf industry." Thus, astroturf in our city is likely to shorten athletic careers. Additionally, we have soccer moms and dads coaching, running, referring and

engaging in other activities on these same fields. A loss of leg movement due to joint injury can be devastating and require numerous public services to accommodate - well all know this to be a threat to mortality and mobility. Where synthetic turf and artificial grass are already installed in service in our schools and recreational facilities used by Los Angeles youth, Los Angeles is put at a disadvantage as an incubator of athletic talent leading up to the 2028 Olympics. Given our new knowledge about these artificial products, it is also sending a misleading message to visitors including those who will be here for the Games and will be potentially visiting our schools and recreation areas. For these reasons, I would urge a push to replace any astroturf athletic fields before the commencement of the 2028 Olympic Games. Regards,
David Wolfberg Los Angeles