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**NYC City Council Introduces Bill to Ban &
Remove "Crumb Rubber" Artificial Turf Fields -
Six-Month Moratorium on All New Artificial Turf**

(Manhattan NY - Wednesday, March 26, 2008) - Today, three NYC Council Members will introduce a Bill calling for the ban and removal of crumb rubber infill used in artificial turf fields. The Bill also calls for a six-month moratorium on the installation of all new artificial turf. If passed, this would become the first known law enacted to remove the controversial rubber infill in artificial turf in the country.

A local law "To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, to prohibit the use of certain synthetic turf on surfaces used for recreational purposes." (Text Below) The Bill is co-sponsored by City Council Members Maria Baez (D-Bronx), Letitia James, (WF-Brooklyn) & Eric Gioia (D-Queens).

Background: Due to decades of inadequate expense funding allocated for the maintenance of athletic fields, the City of New York has been increasingly relying on the use of artificial turf. Since 1997, the City has installed more than 130 artificial turf fields in locations including parks, athletic fields, schools, and other settings where natural grass was previously grown. The Parks Department (DPR) alone has installed 78 artificial turf fields and another 27 are currently in design and construction. The majority of these installations have replaced natural turf fields.

Since 2000, Department of Parks Department has relied almost exclusively on artificial turf that uses crumb rubber pellets from tires, including recycled waste tires, as "infill." Since this time the (DPR) has installed more than 70 fields containing more than 30 million pounds of rubber pellets. As per DPR specifications, for every sq. foot of artificial turf, 4 pounds of rubber pellets are installed.

Crumb rubber infill is a petroleum based product which can contain more than two dozen

different chemicals, including many components known to be hazardous to people and the environment, including phthalates, arsenic, cadmium, lead, carbon Black, chrysene, benzo pyrene, vanadium, phthalates and acetone. These chemicals also off-gas and release volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds including a noxious odor. There is also concern about the leeching caused by this material in our soil and ground water.

These chemicals have been linked to cancer, birth defects, and act as developmental inhibitors and adversely affect asthma and exasperate respiratory problems. Tests performed on infill pellets in NYC parks have contained levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH's) that would be considered hazardous by the State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) if those levels were found in actual dirt. These products can be easily digested and regularly come into skin contact with our children and athletes playing in New York City parks and school facilities.

Early research suggests children could be harmed by breathing the chemicals in the turf or by getting it on their skin or in their mouths, according to Dr. Eileen Murphy -Director of the division of science, research and technology for New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection.

According to a report by California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, playgrounds using recycled waste tires released small amounts of chemicals when ingested including five carcinogens. Tests on ingestion via hand-to-surface contact followed by hand-to-mouth contact resulted in an increased cancer risk due to the discovery of chrysene, a known carcinogen. One metal (zinc) and four PAHs were also measured at levels that were at least three times background. Tire dust can also cause allergic reactions. The existence of these chemicals in play areas are especially worrisome for children whose bodies are still developing and when exposed to people with compromised inhume systems. These issues are especially inappropriate for poor neighborhoods that are disproportionately affected by environmental hazards including high rates of asthma and poor air quality.

Another major concern is the amount of heat radiating from artificial turf fields. Surface temperatures taken on artificial turf fields on sunny days throughout the city during the summer of 2007 regularly reached 140 degrees and exceeded 155 degrees. Natural grass, by comparison, measured as low as 83.3 degrees cooler. According to doctors it can take a matter of minutes to get burned on surfaces reaching 120 degrees and a matter of moments when temperatures exceed 140 degrees. Moreover, athletes playing on overheated surfaces are at greater risk of heat stress, fluid loss, dehydration, nausea, exhaustion and heart attacks. Extreme surfaces temperatures also reduce the hours of public use. The transfer of Microorganisms, bacteria, methicillin, staph infections through "turf burns" are also increasingly being raised in connection with artificial turf fields.

Text of Proposed Law:

A local law "To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, to prohibit the use of certain synthetic turf on surfaces used for recreational purposes."

§18-135 Limiting the use of synthetic turf on surfaces used for recreational purposes. a. For purposes of this section, the term "recreational purposes" shall mean any hobby, diversion, sports or other recreational activity, including, but not limited to bicycling, picnicking, camping, kite flying, roller skating, or rollerblading.

b. It shall be unlawful to use crumb rubber or crumb rubber infill for any purpose in any park or for any surface intended for use at any time for recreational purposes within the city of New York.

c. All parks or other surfaces intended for use at any time for recreational purposes within the city of New York that presently contain crumb rubber or crumb rubber infill shall be changed within one year from the enactment of this legislation to materials that do not contain crumb rubber or crumb rubber infill.

d. For six months following the enactment of this legislation, there shall be no construction or renovation in any park or of any surface intended for use at any time for recreational purposes within the city of New York that utilizes any material made in whole or in part from synthetic or artificial turf.

§2. This local law shall take effect sixty days after enactment.

NYC Park Advocates Inc. is a non-profit, non-partisan watchdog group dedicated to restoring public funding, improving public parks, increasing public recreation programs, expanding open space and accessibility, and achieving the equitable distribution of these vital services in New York City for all. We are the only non-profit park advocacy group dedicated to all City, State and Federal parkland in New York City. For more information please visit us at [NYC Park Advocates.org](https://www.nycparkadvocates.org)