



Madam Chair, Mr. Chairman and members of the Children's Committee-

My name is Alex Bergstein. I live in Greenwich and **I support Bill 5139, *An Act Concerning the Use of Recycled Tire Rubber at Municipal and Public School Playgrounds.***

I am here to represent parents. Parents have been misled and misinformed about crumb rubber since it was first introduced to the market years ago. Regardless of whether this material is called "recycled," tire rubber, crumb rubber or artificial turf, the truth is that it is **INDUSTRIAL WASTE**. And it is never appropriate to put children in direct contact with **INDUSTRIAL WASTE**.

Playgrounds are a haven for children – often these are the only places where kids can play freely outdoors. It's our duty as parents and policymakers to ensure that playgrounds are safe. Allowing them to be filled with hazardous material does just the opposite – it creates greater risks for children. Used tires from which crumb rubber is derived are classified as "Hazardous Waste," by the federal government. That this material can be legally shredded and reconstituted as playground material only illustrates a terrible loophole in the classification system. It does **NOT** signify that the material is no longer hazardous. In fact, the material becomes more hazardous once it's shredded because there is more surface area that comes in contact with children. These shredded fibers become entangled in children's hair, stick to their hands and arms, their legs and feet, get in their ears, inside their noses, under their fingernails, between their toes, in their eyes and eyelashes, and worst of all, end up on their lips, and inside their mouths, where they're swallowed and enter the digestive system. Ingesting tires is definitely not an intended use of this product, but it happens to children every day. Crumb rubber also sticks to clothing, onto pets, car seats and tracks onto the floors and furniture inside our homes. If you asked CT parents whether they're comfortable having their children play in, touch and swallow **HAZARDOUS INDUSTRIAL WASTE** and bringing this material into their homes, they would answer with an emphatic "NO."

Despite the turf industry's reassurances that the material is safe, the experts in children's health believe otherwise. You'll hear testimony from the Children's Environmental



Health Center at Mount Sinai that will provide a detailed explanation of these risks. In addition, the federal government announced a few days ago that it's launching a major study on crumb rubber. This announcement acknowledges that the safety of crumb rubber has most definitely NOT been proven. Federal agencies are undertaking this study a decade later than they should have, but at least now they're acting to protect children.

As parents we are finally receiving the information we deserve, and we believe it's unconscionable to allow hazardous material to be repackaged into products for children. If this bill is passed, we can prevent further harm. I'd also like to add that better alternatives are readily available. In fact, they've been available all along. Eight years ago, my daughter's school, Greenwich Academy, installed 3 tire rubber playgrounds because they were advised to do so by their playground consultants. After these were completed at great expense, the school learned the real facts about the cancer-causing chemicals it contained. They made the courageous decision to remove all crumb rubber from their playgrounds (again at great expense) and replace it with natural wood fibers. Simple and natural solutions are available, and they don't cost more.

Thank you Madam Chair, Mister Chairman and members of the Committee for your attention. I respectfully submit this statement on behalf of parents who want their children to grow up without being exposed to industrial waste in their daily lives.

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