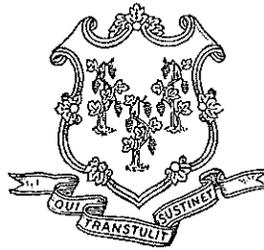


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State of Connecticut
SENATE

MAJORITY WHIP

Chair
Environment Committee

Ranking Member
Internship Committee

Member
Public Health Committee
Transportation Committee

February 16, 2016

Dear Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, Senator Martin, and Representative Kokoruda:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning in favor of House Bill 5139, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF RECYCLED TIRE RUBBER AT MUNICIPAL AND PUBLIC SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS.

As Senate Chair of the General Assembly's Environment Committee, I have spoken with many scientists, physicians, environmental advocates, school superintendents, educators and parents about the potential health risks posed by the chemical composition of surfaces made from crumb rubber. Although experts disagree on the harm of crumb rubber, and there exists conflicting scientific evidence about human health impacts of exposure, I strongly feel there have been enough questions raised on the dangers of these chemicals that we need to err on the side of caution, especially when it comes to the health and safety of our youngest children.

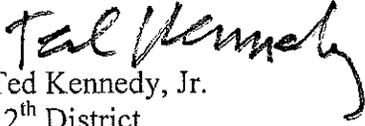
Crumb rubber, which is largely derived from recycled tires, contains 96 different chemicals. Some of these compounds are known human carcinogens. Many of these chemicals are also known to cause other adverse health risks, such as respiratory irritation, allergic reactions and nervous system damage. Nearly half of these chemical ingredients have never been subject to any form of government analysis or formal review of any kind, raising further questions about the public health impacts of human exposure. Even though many chemical compounds contained in crumb rubber have never been tested, most Connecticut citizens falsely believe that they must be safe if the federal government allows them to be widely used.

I realize that there is considerable controversy arising from recent proposals to construct artificial fields in several Connecticut towns. Incomplete scientific evidence makes local decision making and broad legislative consensus very difficult at this moment. The issue of using crumb rubber for playgrounds, however, is distinguishable, both because of the fact that young children are the primary users of play areas that are the subject of this legislation, and because the immune systems and brains of our children are still developing and are therefore more susceptible to toxic substances. I hope that the General Assembly can at least acknowledge that exposures to crumb rubber-based fields and playgrounds are more dangerous to young children than to adults or even older children.

I believe that, as legislators, we have an obligation to ensure the health of our youngest citizens by erring on the side of safety until more study is conducted. I ask that the Children's Committee to report HB 5139 favorably out of committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this most important legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,


Ted Kennedy, Jr.
12th District
Senate Chair, Environment Committee