



March 26th, 2024

Chair Hansen and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carolina Ortiz, Associate Executive Director at COPAL, and I am submitting this letter on behalf of COPAL in support of HF3705, which will add permeable synthetic turf to the Minnesota Stormwater Manual, providing yet another option for homeowners to control runoff in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner.

Here at COPAL, some of our most important priorities include environmental justice, and ensuring that Latino and underrepresented communities have access to a healthy and sustainable place to live.

HF3705 not only supports jobs, but it also provides a sustainable option for homeowners to provide a lawn for their children to play on **without wasting precious water** to maintain it, **without having to use pesticides** to keep their children safe from bugs, **without the use of harmful fertilizers**, and **without PFAS**. Additionally, this will help homeowners maintain a sustainable lawn in shaded areas where grass just won't grow without the need of continuous wasteful watering.

This option will incentivize homeowners to place planters with pollinator-friendly products that will contribute to our pro pollinator efforts.

Lastly, as Minnesotans, we should be free to do what we believe is best for our properties and families. Adding this option to the Minnesota Stormwater Manual will help us achieve that. COPAL and our 375 members throughout the state fully support HF3705.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carolina Ortiz'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carolina Ortiz
Associate Executive Director

Letter of support for HF3705

Mister Chair and Member of the Committee:

My name is Jon Lipinski and I reside in the City of Lino Lakes. I have been researching many different synthetic grass products for approximately three years. I have a background in planning and environmental due diligence. The purpose of this was to utilize a drought-tolerant, low-maintenance, alternative option to grass that wouldn't need to drain our valuable resources and still allow for safe play in the yard. After much research, we decided to go with ForeverLawn's line of eco-friendly synthetic grass, specific to our yard for the reasons listed below:

- Water conservation (1,984- to 2,976-gallons of water saved per week based on 1 to 1.5-inches of water per SF per week needed to maintain a healthy lawn)(13,888- to 20,832-gallons per year saved based on 7 month operations of irrigation just from our property);
- No fertilizers and chemicals in addition to no runoff (2008 EPA study est. 40-60% of lawn fertilizer is carried to surface and ground water);
- No noise or air pollution from lawn equipment (According to the EPA, one hour operating a new gasoline lawn mower emits the same amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxide driving a new car 45 miles (approx. five percent of total air pollution));
- Health issues requiring the need for a low maintenance option;
- No crumb rubber infill, using a natural environmentally friendly anti-microbial sand infill;
- Longevity of the product with an expected useful life of at least 20 to 25 years (many times more with proper maintenance) with no fading, is not flammable, and does not decompose or leach hazardous materials;
- 100% permeable fabric and the sub-base porous rock acts as a better filtration system for groundwater, considering our issues with Manganese in the Lino Lakes public well system;
- Based on the USDA soil map, the soils at our home consist of mucky peat, which has a water permeability rating of 0.57-5.95 in/hr. These products have a water permeability rating of 28.5 in/hr with the synthetic grass and aggregate base having a water permeability rating of 12.6 in/hr. Both of which are well above the normal soil at my residence.
- No stormwater runoff, all rainwater is permeated through, filtered by the base, and recharges the groundwater;
- Beautify our property and neighborhood and increase property values (national sales and realtor studies indicate a 10-15% on average property value increase for synthetic grass landscaping upgrades).

No municipality within the State of Minnesota has an ordinance specifically denying use of the product. The City of Lino Lakes ordinance states "The City may allow flexibility in landscape standards if there are conflicts with solar power, wind power, water harvesting, food production, or **other innovative measures** proposed for the site." After completion of 90% of the project, the City gave ForeverLawn and us a stop work order. We drafted an ordinance for the City, which included high standards for product use and installation. We also provided the City with many research and testing documents proving the benefits of the product; however, we were denied by the City due to an unwillingness to be educated on the product and benefits of use. My yard has remained an aggregate base since August of 2023, all the while my child and the neighborhood children could've been using our yard for play during this relatively warm and dry winter.

This whole ordeal of trying to be a steward to the local environment while running into a municipality with an unwillingness to learn about something beneficial has taken a great toll on my family mentally, emotionally, and financially.

It is my hope that we can start using common sense and learn about alternative products that can aid us in conserving water while not having the need for fertilizers/chemicals. Synthetic grass products manufactured by reputable companies and installed to manufacturers specifications are a great benefit based on research. These products should not only be considered, but encouraged to help save our clean water resources.

Thank you.

Jon Lipinski
75 Robinson Drive
Lino Lakes, MN 55014
jdanelectro@hotmail.com

Mister Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for HF3705. My name is Linda Warner. I reside in the Highland neighborhood of Saint Paul. I'm a Realtor Estate Broker and have experience in referring Clients for yard development and improvement. There are some awful products in the market that are not permeable.

Currently, we are replacing turf grass at our home. The sod was laid in 2013 and has not performed well. Despite urban living and rigorous lawn care, we have been unable to grow grass in our shaded lawn or where raccoons have dug up grass searching for grubs. With ruts, we cannot manage runoff water and keep it away from our pool.

My husband and I are avid recyclers and the ability to recycle is considered in all our purchases. We have consciously decided to use a product with a knitted base and set upon 4" of gravel. No PFOs or PFAs are in this product. It is also fully recyclable when delivered to an appropriate recycler. We will also be eliminating the need for lawn care and the heavy emissions of lawn care equipment.

We are very pleased to see this Bill and to prevent repeating the substandard installations in America's southwest.

Thank you.

Linda K Warner
2184 Lower Saint Dennis Rd
St Paul, MN 55116
651-983-4863

March 26, 2024

Dear Chair Hansen, Vice Chair Jordan and the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee Members:

I am writing today on behalf of the Coalition for Plastic Reduction in opposition to the following bill: HF3705 Installation of permeable synthetic turf added to best management practices to control stormwater runoff.

Our concerns are as follows:

- **Microplastics - environment**
Permeable synthetic turf is made of plastic blades of grass. They will be exposed to sunlight, and extreme weather conditions, which will cause them to break down and shed microplastic particles. Using this product for stormwater runoff control will result in these particles going directly into our water systems. This plastic material is also made with toxic chemical additives which constantly leach and will end up in the surrounding environment. Plastic particles have been found in our drinking water and even in rainwater. Using permeable synthetic turf to control stormwater runoff will only increase the magnitude of this problem.
- **Microplastics – health**
Microplastics have been found in human blood, lungs, stool, placenta and breastmilk. They have been found in all organs of the body, including the brain, in cadaver tissue. Microplastics enter our organs and can cause organ dysfunction. Nanoplastics enter our cells and can damage the cellular structure. The full impact of these particles on our health is not yet known but plastic does not belong in our bodies.
- **Climate change and environmental justice**
Plastic releases methane when exposed to the elements, which contributes to climate change. Methane is 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere. In addition, plastic production is an environmental justice issue with front-line communities, like Cancer Alley in Louisiana, suffering from toxic pollution. It also impacts front-line communities in Minnesota when it is disposed of in landfills or incinerators.

Microplastic particles are found everywhere on the planet. They are in the air, water, and soil and they are in us. We need to decrease our exposure to plastic. We urge you to reconsider recommending using permeable synthetic turf as a best management practice.

Sincerely,
Lori Olinger
Coalition for Plastic Reduction



March 26th, 2024

Committee Chair and Committee Members:

My name is Irma Márquez Trapero and I am submitting this letter on behalf of LatinoLEAD in support of SF3869 / HF 3705.

As an organization, some of our priorities include the economic wellbeing of our Latino population in the state, access to better professional opportunities, and ensuring that Latinos thrive in a healthy and sustainable environment.

SF3869 / HF3705 ensures that Latinos continue to get employment in the industry to sustain themselves and their families. Additionally, it also helps promote a more sustainable way of living and maintaining our properties by conserving a vast amount of water, not having to use pesticides, and avoiding harmful fertilizers.

SF3869 / HF3705 also promotes freedom to do what we believe is best with our own properties and for our children; and gives homeowners another option to control runoff.

For the reasons described above, we support the environmental benefits that SF3869 / HF3705 will provide for Minnesota.

In community,
Irma Márquez Trapero
Chief Executive Officer
LatinoLEAD
irma@latinoleadm.n.org



March 25, 2024

Re: SF3869/HF3705 OPPOSE

Dear Chair Hansen and members of the committee,

Clean Water Action was founded in 1972 with the mission to protect the land on which we live, the air we breathe, and the water we drink. We represent over 132,000 Minnesota members, and we are writing to share our concerns regarding SF3869/HF3705, which addresses synthetic turf.

We must protect our waters and aquatic habitats from contamination from false solutions and supporting the addition of synthetic turf to the best management practices to control stormwater runoff is just that - a false solution.

While we appreciate the intent of this bill and the fact that PFAS is specifically prohibited as a component of artificial turf, we still have many concerns regarding encouraging the use of synthetic turf both in general and as a method to manage stormwater runoff.

- **Prevalence of microplastics** - Depending on the size of the turf field, 200-3200 pounds of microplastics are released into the environment each year (Dublin). Microplastics have been found throughout the human body, including in breast milk, cord blood, sperm, the brain, the colon, and blood. In fact, over 90% of humans have microplastics in their systems. One study estimated the average adult takes in up to 121,000 microplastic particles per year through air, food, and beverages (*Microplastics Facts & Figures*, n.d.). The fact that humans are consuming so many microplastics is concerning because of the long-term impact associated with exposure to microplastics. These impacts include reduced food consumption, impaired growth, behavior problems, reduced fertility, and damage to cells and DNA, among other concerns (*Microplastics Facts & Figures*, n.d.).

We are also increasingly seeing fish consumption advisories because of high levels of microplastics found in aquatic animals. This is a problem impacting every aspect of human life.

- **Turf contains many toxic chemicals with negative human health impacts:**
 - Benzene: known human carcinogen
 - Arsenic: known human carcinogen
 - Styrene: anticipated to be a human carcinogen
 - Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs): anticipated to be a human carcinogen
 - Zinc: neurotoxicant
 - Cadmium: known human carcinogen
 - Chromium: known human carcinogen; respiratory irritant
 - VOCs and SVOCs (e.g. benzothiazole, hexane, toluene, formaldehyde): respiratory irritants or asthma triggers
 - Neurotoxicants: some are known human carcinogens
 - Phthalates: reproductive toxicant

- Crystalline Silica: known human carcinogen; respiratory irritant
- Latex: allergen
- Particulate matter: respiratory irritant or asthma trigger
- Turf replaces natural grass and harms pollinators (Dubin, 2023)

Turf is not a solution to manage stormwater. It ends up in a landfill at the end of its lifecycle. With 98 out of Minnesota's 101 landfills leaching into the groundwater, this directly impacts our water quality. It's vital that to protect the ecosystem we encourage native vegetation rather than synthetic and false solutions.

We appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge a no vote on SF3869/HF3705.

Sincerely,

Avonna Starck
Minnesota State Director
Clean Water Action

Dubin, C. (2023, April 28). *Synthetic Turf is HAZARDOUS — Beyond Plastics - Working To End Single-Use Plastic Pollution*. Beyond Plastics. Retrieved March 25, 2024, from <https://www.beyondplastics.org/fact-sheets/synthetic-turf>

Microplastics Facts & Figures. (n.d.). Ocean Conservancy. Retrieved March 25, 2024, from <https://oceanconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Microplastics-Fact-Sheet-FINAL-2.3.23.pdf>

March 25, 2024



Minnesota House
Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

Re: Permeable Synthetic Turf (HF 3705)

Dear Chair Hansen and Members of the Committee

The Minnesota Zero Waste Coalition, on behalf of the organizations listed below, are writing in opposition to HF3705.

Our coalition works to empower Minnesotans to have a voice when it comes to waste. Our movement centers the voices and experiences of frontline communities, who are most negatively and directly impacted by the extraction of resources, production of goods, and disposal of waste.

Installing permeable synthetic turf to control stormwater runoff is a false solution and should not be considered by the state as a “best practice.” Rather Minnesotans should be made aware of the environmental impacts.

One major issue is related to microplastic pollution. Synthetic turf is typically made from polyethylene or polypropylene, which are types of plastic. Over time, the turf breaks down, shedding microplastics into the environment, including waterways and soil. These microplastics can be harmful to wildlife and ecosystems.

Additionally, the infill material used in synthetic turf, often made from recycled tires, can release harmful chemicals and compounds into the environment. Runoff from synthetic turf fields can also contain pollutants like heavy metals and chemicals used in the turf’s production, which can negatively impact water quality.

Proper disposal of synthetic turf at the end of its life cycle is another concern. Since it is made of plastic, it does not biodegrade and can contribute to landfill waste if not recycled properly.

The state should focus on actual solutions that are good for both the environment and human health. We urge you to vote no on this bill.

Sincerely,



Krystle D'Alencar
Member of the [MN Zero Waste Coalition](#)
Organizer, Minnesota Environmental Justice Table



Lucy Mullany
Member of the [MN Zero Waste Coalition](#)
Director of Policy & Advocacy, Eureka Recycling

Minnesota Zero Waste Coalition Members:

Beyond Plastic Mankato Area
Coalition to Reduce Plastic
Climate Generation
Clean Water Action / Fund
CURE Minnesota
Eureka Recycling
Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate (HPHC)
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
Minnesota Environmental Justice Table
Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light
MN350
Recycling Electronics for Climate Action (RECA)
Reuse Minnesota
Rusty & the Crew
Sierra Club North Star Chapter