



This is the second in a series of articles, prepared by Chevy Chase citizens using public sources, that address the growing risks associated with artificial turf playing fields. Hazards of excessive heat and increased injury have long been documented. New findings on the extreme toxicity of PFAS in artificial turf call into serious question its continued use. Maret School plans to install nearly four acres of artificial turf for its field development at the Episcopal Center for Children at Utah and Nebraska Avenues.

2. Why residents across the city should care about what happens at the ECC field.

On March 14, 2023, the EPA initiated its proposal to establish national drinking water standards limiting per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), called “forever chemicals” because they do not easily break down. The EPA wants to limit six specific PFAS. Significantly, these include both early PFAS like PFOA and PFOS and newer, supposedly “safer” PFAS such as GenX.

When you visit the EPA’s website it becomes clear that the battle against PFAS is not new. The proposed requirement is clearly only the latest move in an ongoing battle to “combat PFAS pollution” as part of the Agency’s “PFAS Strategic Roadmap” which lays out a plan to limit the proliferation of these dangerous chemicals. Details of the new drinking water standards are being worked out and legally enforceable levels should be established by the end of this year.

The EPA expects the new legally enforceable limits, “will prevent thousands of deaths and reduce tens of thousands of serious PFAS-attributable illnesses.” <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>

In justification of the new standards, the EPA, “transmitted to the Science Advisory Board four draft documents with recent scientific data and new analyses that indicate that negative health effects may occur at much lower levels of exposure to PFOA and PFOS than previously understood.” In other words, new research, not yet published, substantiates the dangers of even minimal exposure to PFAS. The legally enforceable levels are expected to be on the parts per *trillion* level, simply because that is the lowest level which can even be detected. The indication is no level of PFAS is considered safe.

The runoff from the proposed plastic turf of the Maret fields, located in the Rock Creek watershed, would flow into the Potomac River, and then into Chesapeake Bay.

Chemical manufacturer 3M recently reached a \$10.3 billion settlement with U.S. cities and towns over PFAS contamination. The suit specifically addressed the contamination of public drinking water. *The Washington Post* reported on July 19th that DC Attorney General Brian Schwalb has filed a lawsuit against twenty-five chemical companies for polluting city soil and water with PFAS chemicals since the 1950s.

Is the ability to play sports in the rain worth poisoning our city?

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