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## Connecticut Attorney General's Office

### Press Release

#### Attorney General Calls Synthetic Turf Study Dangerously Deceptive, Urges Its Removal And Revision

August 19, 2008

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal today called on the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to immediately remove and revise a report on its website that may dangerously and deceptively mislead citizens into believing that artificial turf has been proven safe.

Blumenthal said the CPSC relied on a grossly inadequate and badly flawed study in declaring synthetic turf safe to install and play on -- focusing narrowly and insufficiently on lead, while failing to examine several other possible chemicals and concerns.

In a letter to CPSC Acting Chairman Nancy Ann Nord, Blumenthal said the CPSC's claims -- based on such a "crudely cursory study" -- may dangerously deceive municipal and state leaders nationwide about the safety of synthetic turf.

For the sake of public health and safety, Blumenthal said the CPSC has a moral and possibly legal obligation to immediately remove and revise its synthetic turf report from its website.

"This report and release are as deceptive as some of the advertising and marketing of consumer products prosecuted by the Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general," Blumenthal said.

"There is a clear and present danger that municipal and state decision makers - as well as parents and citizens -- will rely on this unconscionably deficient report. It is replete with unsound scientific methodology and conclusions, and unreliable findings. It may lead to unsupportable and unwise commitments by towns and cities or their boards of education to build or replace athletic fields.

"I have personally reached no conclusion on the safety or health issues concerning artificial turf, because no complete or comprehensive study has been done. This one, far from being complete or comprehensive, is profoundly misleading and misguided and may lead to bad policymaking. Timely corrective action -- indeed immediate revision -- is essential.

"The CPSC review of artificial turf safety focused entirely on the issue of lead contamination from artificial blades of grass. While this one issue is important, it is neither the sole nor the most significant issue. There is no indication that CPSC staff considered the transferability or emission -- especially at high temperatures -- of toxic chemicals from the crumb rubber used at the base of artificial turf. This crumb rubber is usually made from recycled tires, containing chemicals -- including benthothiazole, butyplated hydroxyanisole and phthalates -- that may be toxic or carcinogenic under some circumstances.

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"Similarly, there is no indication that CPSC considered other important risks, some presented or aggravated by very high temperatures in the summer sun, and exposure to serious infection caused by the more extensive skin burns and abrasions created by falls on this material. Further, while CPSC staff admits that aging, wear and exposure to sunlight may change the amounts of chemicals released, CPSC has not even attempted to study or quantify the effects of those changes on health and safety.

"Even as to the lead issue, the CPSC study is seriously and reprehensibly flawed. The study evaluated only 14 samples of artificial turf, even though thousands of these fields are in use. Worse, six samples were from portions of turf that was never installed or used, and one sample came from a field that was no longer in use. Thus, only half of the samples -- or seven -- were from turf in current use. The severely deficient scope of this fact finding eviscerates the credibility of CPSC's sweeping conclusions about thousands of artificial turf surfaces in daily use.

"It is mystifying and mindboggling that an agency charged with protecting our children from unsafe products would declare artificial turf 'OK to Install, OK to Play On' without studying these critical health and safety threats.

"Continued public dissemination of this misleading and deceptive material might well constitute a violation of our consumer protection laws if done by a company selling this product. The CPSC's distributing it -- and vouching for its accuracy -- constitutes a violation of its public trust."

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) -- at Blumenthal's urging and with funding from a lawsuit settlement by his office -- is beginning a study of artificial turf. Blumenthal recommended that the CPSC coordinate additional study with the DEP to ensure a thorough and prompt examination of synthetic turf.

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