

Dear Mayor Rector and City Council,

The question to allow and regulate artificial turf in Clearwater goes back more than a decade when one homeowner decided to install some in her front yard. Ultimately, city leaders allowed the individual homeowner to keep her lawn and postponed making a larger decision on whether or not to allow it citywide, until now.

The Environmental Advisory Board recognizes artificial turf offers a potential to save water and reduce lawn maintenance costs. However, artificial turf does not benefit the environment. It is essentially a single-use plastic that does not meet the standards set in GreenPrint 2.0, the city's sustainability plan, or Florida Friendly Landscaping practices.

Natural lawns promote biodiversity, allow small animals to forage, help recharge groundwater, reduce erosion and filter stormwater runoff. They clean and cool the air by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. Artificial turf is shown to get extremely hot (up to 180 degrees), is made of forever chemicals that leach into waterways and is not recyclable so it will eventually end up in the landfill.

Rather than allow artificial turf, the Environmental Advisory Board urges the City Council to promote Florida Friendly Landscaping practices which aim to conserve water, preserve natural resources and reduce water pollution.

The board understands the City Council has an interest in regulating artificial turf, while the product does not meet GreenPrint 2.0 standards, Florida Friendly Landscaping criteria and its environmental risks far outweigh the potential benefits, the council should demand the highest possible standards including ensuring it's PFA free and recyclable should the council adopt an ordinance allowing it.

Respectfully,

Jared Leone  
Chair

Glenna Wentworth  
Vice Chair

Kelly Dobbin  
Member

Jason Drizd  
Member

Michael Rubino  
Member