

### NGOs seek retraction of US agencies' crumb rubber study

Finding that exposure to humans appears limited is 'not supported by the evidence'

6 August 2019 / Children's products, Substances of concern, United States

Two NGOs have filed a request for the US EPA to retract its recent study on recycled tyre crumb rubber materials, claiming that the report violates information quality guidelines.



The 6 August complaint from the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) and the Ecology Center (Michigan) has come in response to a **joint report**<sup>1</sup> from the EPA and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). In it, the agencies found that while there are a variety of chemicals present in the materials – commonly used in playgrounds and synthetic turf fields – human exposure to these "appears to be limited".

The conclusion, however, was **criticised**<sup>2</sup> as "premature", particularly because the second part of the agencies' studies is to focus on human exposure and has yet to be released.

And PEER and the Ecology Center are now seeking for the agency to retract its conclusion and conduct further studies on the safety of artificial turf, in order "to ensure the objectivity, utility, and integrity of the information EPA disseminates to the public."

The letter, filed under the Information Quality Act, argues that the study is "based on inaccurate, incomplete, and unreliable information regarding the potential risks to human health and the environment."

Specific concerns include statements that it:

- used an "inaccurate" lead testing methodology;

- tested for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) at "inadequate" temperatures; and

- failed to consider the combined effects of various chemical components of tire crumbs or the impact of substances that lack toxicity information.

And the conclusion it draws on exposure, they say, "is not supported by the evidence and is outside the scope of its assessment."

Therefore the NGOs are asking for the EPA to retract its conclusion and issue a public statement that the study has been withdrawn.

Moreover, they want the agency to "either undertake an adequate testing protocol that cures the flaws enumerated above, or reissue the report with explanations of these additional limitations and removal of all conclusory statements about low exposure to the chemicals associated with artificial turf."

The organisations have requested a response within 90 days.



**Kelly Franklin**<sup>3</sup>  
North America editor

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[US agencies: Human exposure to crumb rubber chemicals 'appears limited'](#)<sup>4</sup>

[US agencies' crumb rubber finding 'premature'](#)<sup>5</sup>

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[Press release](#)<sup>7</sup>

[Report](#)<sup>8</sup>

[Project overview](#)<sup>9</sup>

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<https://www.peer.org/news/press-releases/epa-fumbles-artificial-turf-science.html>

<https://www.epa.gov/chemical-research/july-2019-report-tire-crumb-rubber-characterization-0>

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