

From: **Sean Mitchell** <[REDACTED]>

Date: Sat, Nov 13, 2021 at 6:36 PM

Subject: Turf Fields & NPS

To: <[REDACTED]>, <[REDACTED]>, <[REDACTED]>,
<[REDACTED]>, <[REDACTED]>, <[REDACTED]>

Dr. Hallett and School Committee Members,

I have been following the Nantucket Public Schools turf field debate for some time and although I was intending to watch from the sidelines, I feel compelled after recent events to speak up and voice my concerns. Although you may know me as a member of the Nantucket Fire Department, I'm not writing on behalf of the NFD or anyone else. I am, however, writing as a longtime islander and parent of three future public school students. I'm also sharing my perspective as a member of the fire service who has spent the last two years in a daily battle against the unnecessary use of cancer-causing chemicals in my profession. A profession that has been ravaged by ever-increasing cancer rates, often blamed solely on smoke exposure, despite a clear decrease in the incidence of fire over the last few decades.

Turf fields and firefighting PPE might seem to have no relation to one another. However, I see many similarities between the current debate taking place around the proposed fields and the battle we have been waging against the industries that create toxic chemicals and spread them around our communities as they lie to us about their safety. I've watched numerous presentations from your architect, Dick Webb, where he tells the citizens of Nantucket - the people who will be paying for these fields and will be sending their children to play on these fields - that he has received the "manufacturer's confirmation of no use of PFAS". I've learned enough these past two years to know that a "manufacturer's confirmation" is worthless, and when I hear him repeat it at each presentation, I cringe. We should know better than to trust the word of the very people who profit from the sale of these products. Of course they say it's safe. I believe his assurances have already been proven false (by his own consultant Laura Green), as have his assurances that the turf field will be recycled. It will not.

It so happens that the manufacturer he's speaking of, TenCate, is one of the well-known bad actors in the firefighting PPE world - the same TenCate that has been knowingly adding toxic chemicals to our turnout gear while never telling us they are there.

With that said, I'm not writing to debate the safety of PFAS, or to discuss the amount of toxic chemicals we are willing to expose our children to so we can have a nicer looking football field. There will be another time for that as we get closer to Town Meeting and an

eventual vote.

I'm writing specifically to address the use of taxpayer money to hire Dr. Laura Green, a well-known industry-sponsored defender of toxic chemicals, to gaslight our community. In all honesty, even after watching her presentation to the School Committee and researching her prior work, I had no intention of becoming involved in this debate. I've dealt with enough "Laura Green types" to know that there is never an end to the debate. There is always an answer from them to every good point we raise. They cherry-pick single statements from legitimate studies to make it seem as though the entire study supports their claims. Or they simply use biased studies conducted by the industry. They always sprinkle in enough facts with their fiction to cause confusion so they can just move on to the next fire department, or school system, and earn their money while they keep a billion-dollar industry alive.

What compelled me to contact you was Laura Green's incendiary emails to Ayesha Khan, the wife of one of my fellow firefighters. Laura Green, after being asked to leave Ayesha alone, has sent her yet another email where she attempted to "educate" Ayesha on why her husband Nate, and many of my firefighting friends, have been stricken with occupational cancer. The fact that Laura has never met Nate, has no idea what he's been exposed to at work, no idea how many fires he's fought, or how much AFFF he's absorbed into his body, did not stop her from opining on what's caused his cancer. This is because facts don't matter to people like her. A truly independent, legitimate scientist would never make such statements. The sad part is, we have come to expect this from industry-funded scientists. What we don't expect is that our own school system would be the reason she's here in our community spreading her misinformation and harassing our citizens.

Using taxpayer money to hire Laura Green so she can falsely minimize the risks, not only regarding turf but also the risks we are facing as firefighters, has to end. Hiring someone like Laura Green to come into our community and make patently false statements in defense of manufacturers such as DuPont and 3M, while our community is suing those very manufacturers is completely nonsensical. Members of our community, including our firefighters, are no doubt battling illnesses caused by those manufacturers. We will spend millions of dollars cleaning up contamination caused by their chemicals, while our school department invites them to add to the contamination.

Laura's recent emails regarding firefighters and occupational illness will not go unchallenged. She has opened the door for me and my fellow firefighters to enter the discussion and respond to her words and presentations head-on, as we have with the PPE industry. To me, this issue is about much more than PFAS – it's about good people banding

together to fight back against billion-dollar corporations who view us as disposable. We should be leading the fight against these people, not inviting them into our community. We should be teaching our children to speak out against these wrongs and to use their education to make the world a better, safer place – and to not be driven by which side pays the most.

I'm respectfully asking that the NPS relationship with Laura Green end immediately and that Dick Webb be asked to fact check his presentations and correct his previous misstatements, or also be removed from this project. I, and many of my fellow firefighters, will be keeping a close eye on this discussion going forward. We will attend the meetings and we will challenge the misleading statements of consultants, especially when they involve the health and safety of our firefighters.

Respectfully,

Sean Mitchell