



RJR: 2022 Legislative Session – END OF SESSION Report (MASTMA)

Saturday, April 16th, 2022

I. **INTRODUCTION**

At the stroke at midnight on Monday, April 11th, the Maryland General Assembly, adjourned (SINE DIE) the legislative session in Annapolis, Maryland. During the past 90-days the state legislature introduced nearly 2,500 individual pieces of legislation. In total, 836 bills successfully passed the legislature and are now awaiting the Governor’s signature to enact them into law - these bills covered a variety of issues that included: public safety, IT/Cybersecurity, labor, and the environment.

For the team at Z&C, we were excited and proud to have partnered with the Mid-Atlantic Sports Turf Managers Association (MASTMA) for their first year lobbying the state legislature. A few months prior to the commencement of the 2022 session, Z&C developed a comprehensive strategic plan that identified three major goals necessary for MASTMA’s initial introduction into Annapolis.

They were the following:

- *Educating targeted legislators about MASTMA and their Best Practices Manual;*
- *Cultivate new relations (and supporters) within the General Assembly to ensure that MASTMA (and professional certified managers) have an “equal” voice when state-policy decisions, impacting their industry, are being proposed (and enacted); and*
- *Awareness & Monitoring – review and report all legislation introduced during the 2022 legislative session that may have an impact on MASTMA (and their members) 2022 Session Objective.*

It would be an understatement using the term “mission accomplished” when assessing the question if MASTMA achieved these goals. MASTMA not only fulfilled their goals - they exceeded them.

The following report provides a comprehensive summary on the legislative actions conducted between Z&C and MASTMA during the past three months and identifies key recommendations for the Association to consideration for the remaining interim period before next year.

II. EDUCATION & CULTIVATION

During its first legislative session representing MASTMA, the team at Z&C successfully increased the knowledge and understanding of the organization with important, key legislators.

Throughout the 90-day legislative session, Richard Reinhardt from Z&C held nearly a dozen introductory meetings with legislators and MASTMA leadership from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs (EHEA) Committee and House Environmental & transportation (E&T). These meetings included engagement with committee leadership (Vice Chairs, Senator Cheryl Kagan (Montgomery Co.) and Delegate Dana Stein (Baltimore Co.)), various committee members (representing all four regions of the state), as well as meetings with sponsors of key legislation important to the Association.

Overall, the meetings set a solid foundation between MASTMA and targeted legislators important for advancing the association's agenda (and priorities) in Annapolis. It also provided a personal engagement for legislators to become more aware about the association, their membership and expertise – but most importantly, it provided an opportunity for lawmakers to familiarize themselves with MASTMA's newly published Best Management Practices Manual (BMPs).

Together, Z&C and MASTMA educated the General Assembly on the four major purposes of the BMPs:

1. REINFORCE that the Association is educated and highly trained professionals that make decisions based on scientific fact and experience.
2. RECOGNIZE the Sports Turf Management Industry professionals as stewards of the environment by articulating to organizations, communities, and state officials exactly how we operate in a clear transparent manner.
3. SERVE as the basis for how professionals conduct themselves in accordance with state/local regulations and a resource available for other STMA Chapters.
4. ENSURE the safety of the community and environment remain the top priority in our line of work.

Communications. Additionally, we developed legislative collateral on behalf of MASTMA that was shared with legislators and their staff. This material was an integral form of communication with legislators' introductions and understanding about the association (and its mission). Finally, Z&C was a special guest speaker at MASTMA's *Annual Spring Education Event*, on March 3rd at Camden Yards, to present the 45-day half-way legislative report. In total over 150 members and guests were in attendance.

III. **LEGISLATIVE ACTION**

A. *By the Numbers...*

During the past 90-days, Z&C provided weekly reports to MASTMA executive leadership that provided newly introduced legislation that were potential interests to the association. Each week, Z&C and MASTMA reviewed these reports and determined which of the bills required further action by MASTMA.

Of the nearly 2,500 bills introduced during the legislative session, Z&C sorted through them and **identified nearly 50** that had some impact on the sports turf managers industry. Of those 50, **11 (including cross-files) were classified as priority bills to monitor**. Of the 11 priority bills, MASTMA took official positions and testified on the **5 (including cross-files)** of the following pieces of legislation.

These included:

1. **HB131 - Synthetic Turf - Chain of Command**: This bill establishes tracking and reporting requirements for producers and owners of “synthetic turf” and “turf infill” that is sold, distributed, and installed in the State, as specified. Affected owners and producers must submit certain information, including chain of custody information, to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). MDE must serve as a repository for the chain of custody information submitted under the bill and develop and maintain a website to publish the information submitted to MDE pursuant to the bill.

The bill establishes penalties, including fines, for individuals who violate the bill’s provisions.

MASTMA’s Position: **SUPPORT**

Status in the General Assembly: **FAILED**. The bill has passed the House Chamber, with amendments by the House Chamber, but stalled in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

2. **House Bill 435: Youth Sports Programs - Registrations, Personnel, and Policy**: This bill requires annual registration and training of “youth sports program personnel,” including volunteers who participate in a youth sports program. A youth sports program must provide specified health and safety information to each parent or guardian who registers a youth athlete, and the parent or guardian must submit a signed acknowledgment of receipt of this information.

MASTMA’s Position: **SUPPORT**

Status in the General Assembly: **FAILED**. Received a bill hearing in the House Ways & Means Committee hearing on February 10th. No further action was taken.

3. **HB1235: Youth Sports Safety Commission:** This bill establishes a Youth Sports Safety Advisory Commission. The Commission will be responsible for reporting to the Maryland General Assembly on the following issues:
- i. Study evidence-based policies and practices for maximizing safety for youth athletes based on national research;
 - ii. Seek input from nationally recognized youth sports oversight organizations;
 - iii. Study ways to reduce injury risk levels to youth athletes at different ages; and
 - iv. Make recommendations for implementation of evidence-based best practices for minimizing injury risks for youth athletes.

MASTMA's Position: **SUPPORT with an Amendment**

Status in the General Assembly: **FAILED.** The legislation received a hearing before the House Ways & Means Committee on March 8th. MASTMA successfully lobbied to the bill sponsor to submit an amendment to the bill during the committee to include MASTMA as representative on the commission.

4. **HB387/SB268 - Pesticide Regulation - Transfer to Department of the Environment** – This bill transfers the responsibility for administering existing provisions governing pesticide regulation, plant disease control, and mosquito control, from the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

MASTMA's Position: **OPPOSED**

Status in the General Assembly: **FAILED.** Following heavy opposition during the bill hearing, the Senate EHEA issued an “Unfavorable” Report; the House bill was withdrawn.

B. MASTMA Monitored the Following Other Priority Legislation

5. **HB371/ SB246: Environment - Salt Applicator Certification Program – Establishment** – The bill requires MDE to establish a Salt Applicator Certification Program that:
- (1) encourages efficient winter maintenance of roadways, parking lots, and sidewalks through the use of salt or salt alternatives, and
 - (2) provides a certification to a commercial applicator who successfully completes the program. MDE may delegate administration of the program to a person certified in the use of salt and salt alternatives for the winter maintenance of roadways, parking lots, and sidewalks.

Status in the General Assembly: **FAILED.** Both bills received hearings by the House and Senate standing committees, but no further action was taken.

6. **HB570: Pesticides – Mosquito Control Products and PFAS Chemicals** – This bill generally prohibits the State, a local government, or a certified applicator (or a person working under

the supervision of a certified applicator) from using a mosquito control product that contains “PFAS chemicals.”

In addition, beginning December 31, 2022, the State, a local government, or a certified applicator (or a person working under the supervision of a certified applicator) may not use a mosquito control product unless the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has certified that the product does not contain PFAS chemicals, as specified.

The bill also requires a pesticide distributor, when registering a pesticide used to control mosquitos, to submit an affidavit stating whether the pesticide (1) has ever been stored, distributed, or packaged in a specified container or (2) contains certain PFAS chemicals.

Status in the General Assembly: **FAILED**. The bill received a hearing by the House Health & Government Operations Committees, but no further action was taken.

- 7. HB836 / SB638: Public Schools - Student Athletics - Requirements and Emergency Action Plans (Elijah Gorham Act)** – This bill requires each middle school and high school to develop a venue-specific emergency action plan for the operation and use of automatic external defibrillators (AEDs), and heat acclimatization, as specified. The venue-specific emergency action plan must also include coordination of care for other injuries including cervical spinal injury, concussion and closed head injury, major orthopedic injuries, and severe weather for outdoor facilities.

Status in the General Assembly: **PASSED**. The House Bill successfully passed both Chambers and is now before the Governor for his consideration. The Senate cross-file successfully passed both Chambers, but failed to receive a concurrence before SINE DIE. If enacted, **the bill would take effect July 1, 2022**.

- 8. HB934: Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers - Sale, Offering for Sale, and Use – Prohibition** – This bill prohibits:
- (1) beginning January 1, 2024, a person from selling or offering for sale a gasoline-powered leaf blower in the State, and
 - (2) beginning January 1, 2025, a person from using a gasoline-powered leaf blower in the State.

Any person that sells or offers for sale a gasoline-powered leaf blower in the State must notify the purchaser or potential purchaser that, beginning January 1, 2025, a person may not use a gasoline-powered leaf blower in the State.

A violator is subject to (1) a warning for a first violation and (2) a civil penalty of up to \$500 for a second or subsequent violation.

Status in the General Assembly: **FAILED**. The bill received a hearing by the House Economic Matters Committees, but no further action was taken.

9. **HB1057: Prince George's County - Recreation Blue Ribbon Workgroup PG 406-22** – This emergency bill was heavily amended (based on large stakeholder opposition), establishes the Prince George's County Recreation Blue Ribbon Workgroup for the purpose of conducting a study and providing recommendations to the Prince George's County Council regarding several aspects of providing recreational services in the county. Workgroup recommendations are due to the Prince George's County Council by April 11, 2023.

Status in the General Assembly: **PASSED.** The bill received successfully passed both Chambers, but was significantly amended (from its original intent) and is now before the Governor for his consideration.

IV. **INTERIM ACTION**

The gubernatorial and legislative elections later this year will bring new political agendas and public policy, statewide, during the 2023 legislative session and beyond.

With the new changes coming to Annapolis and the positive momentum that MASTMA created in their first session, it would be to the association's advantage to strongly consider some of the following recommendations during this interim period:

- 1.) Legislative Standing Committee Meetings/ Working Tours. – In the Fall 2022, coordinate a committee lunch/tour at Camden Yards with the House E&T and Senate EHEA Committee Members. MASTMA leadership will have the ability to further cultivate their relationships with these committees, create legislative “champions” for MASTMA, reinforce the positive perception of the association and the sports turf management industry, and educate legislators about the BMPs and how the manual can be an effective “tool” for the lawmakers in shaping public policy.
- 2.) Maryland Association of Counties' Annual Summer / Winter Conferences. – These events are essential venues for MASTMA to their advocacy presence, statewide, while also creating new relationships within local county governments.
- 3.) 90-Day Legislative Session Review. - Reporting & assessing on legislation of interest to MASTMA and determining which bills could be returning to Annapolis, next year.
- 4.) 2023 Legislative Priorities. - Identifying the Priorities & Creating an Official Legislative Agenda for MASTMA to be presented to state legislators and the new Administration next year.