

November 7, 2014

Sepp Blatter  
President  
International Association of Federation Football (FIFA)  
FIFA-Strasse 20  
P.O. Box 80344  
Zurich, Switzerland

Dear Mr. Blatter:

We write to express our concerns over reports that the 2015 Women's World Cup will be held on artificial turf, whereas the men's competition is held entirely on grass. We ask the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) to reconsider this short-sighted and counterproductive decision.

We are particularly concerned by reports that FIFA has ignored the concerns of female players over the safety issues and lack of prestige associated with using turf fields. Furthermore, we are disturbed by reports that FIFA has threatened to retaliate against players who voice concerns and demand the same playing field as their male peers.

Artificial turf both increases the risk of serious injury and fundamentally changes the way the game is played. FIFA has never used turf fields for the men's World Cup. And it appears that it has no plans to do so having committed to using natural grass for the 2018 men's tournament in Russia and 2022 men's tournament in Qatar, host countries with climates at least as challenging as Canada's.

FIFA itself has recognized the inferiority of turf to natural grass. In March, FIFA's weekly magazine published an article titled, "How Bad are the Artificial Turf Pitches?" in which the author points out that male athletes routinely refuse to play on artificial turf, deeming it unacceptable, and "widely regarded as deeply problematic." When FIFA polled top female soccer players around the world, 77% agreed that all matches at major tournaments should be played on natural grass, while just 8% disagreed.

Viewership and interest in women's soccer has never been higher. The 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup Final gave ESPN its highest U.S. ratings ever for a soccer match at the time, drawing 13.5 million viewers in the U.S. And in 2015, the world will again be watching the Women's World Cup with great interest.

Currently ranked first in the world, the United States women's national soccer team has made our country proud time and time again. As members of the United States Senate, we are deeply concerned with FIFA's treatment of these players. We urge you to begin good faith negotiations with these athletes, free of retaliation and with the equal treatment that they deserve.

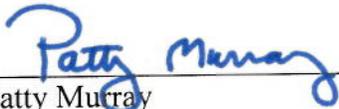
Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
U.S. Senator



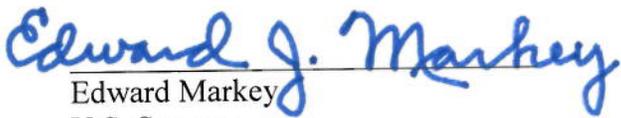
Charles E. Schumer  
U.S. Senator



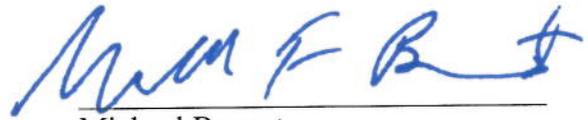
Patty Murray  
U.S. Senator



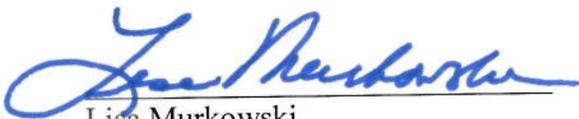
Kirsten Gillibrand  
U.S. Senator



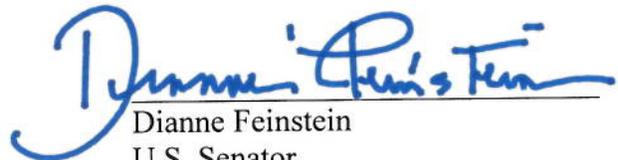
Edward Markey  
U.S. Senator



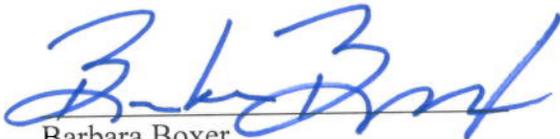
Michael Bennet  
U.S. Senator



Lisa Murkowski  
U.S. Senator



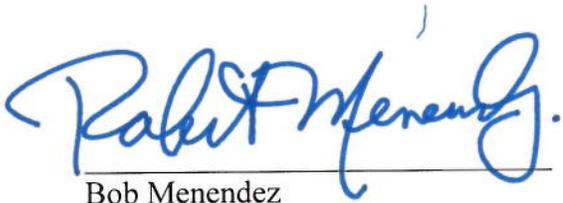
Dianne Feinstein  
U.S. Senator



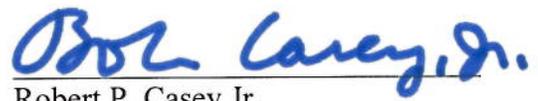
Barbara Boxer  
U.S. Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
U.S. Senator

Handwritten signature of Bob Menendez in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

Bob Menendez  
U.S. Senator

Handwritten signature of Robert P. Casey Jr. in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

Robert P. Casey Jr.  
U.S. Senator

Handwritten signature of Maria Cantwell in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

Maria Cantwell  
U.S. Senator