Bill Brief – House Bill 1061

Construct Two Athletic & Recreation Fields at Northern State University

What does this bill do?

• This project includes the construction of two synthetic turf fields, a pavilion, and a small restroom at Northern State University.
  o The two-story pavilion will include two locker rooms, a training room, and storage for maintenance equipment on the lower level. An upper level will include offices for coaches, restrooms, concessions, media space, and meeting rooms.

Why is it necessary?

• One field will be a practice field for the Northern State University football team. The new Regional Science Education Center at NSU is being built on the current football practice field, so a new practice site is needed.

• The second field will be used by the women’s soccer team for practice and competition, since the current competition field does not meet all NCAA regulations. A new turf field will be designed to comply with those regulations.

• The fields will also be available for use by the general student population for intramurals and other recreational events and as an outdoor classroom for exercise science, wellness, and education courses.
  o Students from the School for the Blind & the Visually Impaired will also have access to these fields. The site for the proposed new school for the blind is adjacent to the fields, which will provide those students with ample space for outdoor activities.

• Turf fields are necessary because the fields will be used on a daily basis during the athletic season. The current practice field is much larger, which allows the football team to practice on different areas of the existing field and minimizes damage to the natural grass field. The proposed site for the new practice field is smaller, so this approach no longer works.

• The soccer team currently practices on one field and competes on the second field. The team will now have just one field and cannot practice and play on the same field if it is natural grass. Daily wear and tear on a natural grass field creates poor field conditions that can lead to injuries.

• Other features of the complex include fan seating on both sides of the pavilion, lighted fields, and a small restroom located on the far side of the field. The restroom will be accessible from the player dugouts and also by individuals using the tennis courts.
• The entire complex will be enclosed with attractive fencing to secure the premises and control access to the fields.

**What is the source of funds for this project?**

• Funding for this project includes ‘other fund’ expenditure authority for $6 million from private gifts donated for this purpose and from $303,314 in Higher Education Facilities Fund’s maintenance and repair funds.

• The fields and pavilion will be built on land owned by Northern State University. The site currently includes two grass fields used by the soccer team, as well as six tennis courts.