



Bringing back the birds

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly

The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan
Vice Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly

CC: Sen. Malcolm Augustine, Sen. Benjamin Brooks, Sen. Mary Beth Carozza, Sen. Jason C. Gallion, Sen. Katie Fry Hester, Sen. Karen Lewis Young, Sen. Bryan W. Simonaire, Sen. Mary Washington, Sen. Ron Watson

22 February, 2024

Subject: American Bird Conservancy supports SB983

Dear Chair McCormick, Vice Chair Catlin, and Members of the Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources Committee,

American Bird Conservancy (ABC), supports SB983 – Lead and Lead-based Ammunition Phase-out.

Ingestion of lead-based ammunition is one of the greatest threats to wildlife in the United States. ABC supports the activities of sportspeople and is not opposed to hunting but recognizes the need to address the high levels of lead poisoning borne from the use of toxic ammunition.

Lead poisoning is killing Golden and Bald Eagles, Turkey Vultures, and other birds of prey in staggeringly high numbers. A [paper published](#) in 2022 by the United State Geological Survey found that lead poisoning *alone* is decreasing the population growth of imperiled Golden Eagles. [Another paper](#) found that lead poisoning is interfering with the recovery of Bald Eagles across the United States.

When a game animal is shot with lead, often the carcass or gut pile is left in the wild. Scavengers ingest tiny lead fragments, ultimately leading to immunosuppression, premature chick death, and death. Lead toxicity can not only cause acute death; it weakens bones, increases susceptibility to disease and infection, degrades motor function, and may increase the likelihood of collisions with humanmade objects. Bald Eagles in neighboring [New York](#) have seen extremely elevated levels of lead poisoning in the last two years.

ABC believes harm to Eagles and other wildlife is not intended by sportspeople; many are unaware of the effects of lead, or otherwise are not presented with lead alternatives. Hunters are the solution here: the provisions established in SB983 would phase-out the use of lead for the taking of wildlife in the state. It would provide a platform for ammunition manufacturers to develop innovative products and continue to generate revenue for conservation programs from Pittman-Robertson dollars (i.e., excise taxes).



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ABC supports SB983 and urges a favorable report. With any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Hardy Kern III".

E. Hardy Kern III
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