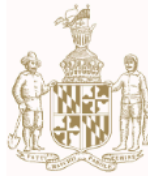


KAREN LEWIS YOUNG
Legislative District 3
Frederick County

Committee on Education, Energy,
and the Environment



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

The Honorable Senator Feldman, Chair
The Honorable Senator Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Annapolis, MD

February 27th, 2024

Testimony in Favor of SB0983 Hunting - Lead and Lead-based Ammunition - Phase-Out

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and esteemed members of this committee,

SB0983 will phase out lead and lead-based ammunition in hunting. We have known for a long time that lead is toxic. There are no safe levels for human consumption. It is negatively impacting our environment, the animals who live in it, and ultimately, us.

By phasing out lead ammunition, we will be protecting hunters and their families who consume the meat. We will be protecting our environment and the species who call it home. Many animals, including Bald Eagles, feast on gut piles left behind by hunters. When they do, they consume the lead bullet fragments still in the meat. Studies found that as many as half of our Bald Eagle population suffered from lead poisoning.

There are alternatives that are just as accurate and lethal but without the toxic side-effects. Some hunters are concerned that many rifles cannot handle copper ammunition because copper is harder than lead. For older rifles, that is generally true. However, the manufacturers of modern rifles are strengthening their products to handle copper ammunition and other alternatives. In fact, lead ammunition was banned nationwide in 1992 for hunting waterfowl. Manufacturers and hunters adapted easily and waterfowl populations are healthy.

Finally, some hunters are concerned about cost differences between lead and copper. The academic research makes clear that these minor differences in cost are attributable to a lack of demand. As we phase-out lead ammunition, the demand and supply of alternatives will increase, correcting imbalances in price.

We have taken lead out of paint, gas, and pipes. It is time we remove it from our ammunition. To protect ourselves and our Bald Eagles, and all wildlife, I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young".

Delegate Karen Lewis Young