



P.O. Box 501
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OPPOSE

Senate Bill 983 (Hunting – Lead and Lead-Based Ammunition – Phase Out)

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND, LLC represent the interests of Maryland's hunting community at both the State and local level. Few realize that hunters underwrite almost 100% of all wildlife management and research costs through their purchase of hunting licenses, stamps, and equipment. For the record: (1) hunters do so willingly b/c of **American System of Conservation Funding**, a user-pay model celebrating its 85th Anniversary which also underscores the noble story of hunters as America's original conservationists; and (2) hunting in Maryland is a powerful economic engine as noted in the link below.

<https://sportsmensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2020-Economic-Impact-of-Hunting-and-Shooting-Technical-Report-V2.pdf>

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The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND, LLC oppose Senate Bill 983 which would impose a statewide ban on the use of lead-based ammunition effective no later than December 31, 2026. We suggest a 2-fold alternative for legislative consideration as explained below.

FIRST: Why not pursue a more measured approach by having Maryland's Department of Natural Resources consider joining the North American Non-Lead Partnership ("Partnership") – formed in 2017 by the Peregrine Fund and the Institute for Wildlife Studies – whose primary mission is to "design and promote voluntary measures to increase the use of non-lead ammunition" (<https://nonleadpartnership.org/resolution/en> -- ATTACHED)? Since inception, 3 state wildlife agencies have joined the Partnership: Arizona Game and Fish Department; Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. Most agree the evolution of going lead-free for hunting will be education and the learning curve.

SECOND: Change the 2026 date to 2028 thus affording the market more time to facilitate conversion from lead-based ammo to non-lead-based ammo in recognition of states moving in that direction (as shown in the link below) coupled with the need for more hunters to accept non-lead-based ammo for hunting. Indeed, those who have shifted to non-lead ammo for hunting report of its consistency, accuracy and, and penetration.

<https://www.longrangeshooting.org/articles/state-regulations-concerning-the-use-of-lead-free-ammunition>

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, Maryland's hunting community recognizes that non-lead-ammo used for hunting could ultimately become the law of the land; not unlike steel shot required for waterfowl hunting since 1991. In Maryland, however, why not consider the two alternative strategies identified herein before imposing a 2026 statutory ban?

RESOLUTION TO JOIN THE NORTH AMERICAN NON-LEAD PARTNERSHIP

WHEREAS, the North American Non-Lead Partnership ('Partnership') was established to conserve wildlife and hunting heritage; and

WHEREAS, part of the stated mission of the Partnership is to provide a *'mechanism to minimize unintentional impacts on wildlife health while protecting the public image of hunting and the associated benefits to the conservation of wildlife and habitat'*; and

WHEREAS, the stated mission of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) includes initiating *'action to benefit the management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources'*; and

WHEREAS, sound research has unequivocally determined lead from hunting ammunition and fishing tackle poses a health hazard to wildlife and has shown the increased use of non-lead ammunition reduces inadvertent impacts of lead on wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the Partnership seeks to expand the coalition of hunters, anglers and other conservationists dedicated to improving ecosystem and wildlife health by voluntarily choosing non-lead options; and

WHEREAS, efforts to improve the health of our native fish and wildlife species are most successful when employed across multiple landscapes and jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the Directors of several state wildlife agencies, namely Arizona, Oregon and Utah have already joined the Partnership; and

WHEREAS, the Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies recently joined the Partnership and encourages its members to consider joining the Partnership at a level they deem appropriate;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the support of the North American Non-Lead Partnership is an appropriate and justifiable action to increase the use of non-lead ammunition to improve ecosystem health; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Health Committee encourages the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies directors to join the North American Non-Lead Partnership at the "Supporting Partner" level, thereby endorsing the efforts of the Partnership and providing either direct funding or in-kind support; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Health Committee encourages individual member states/provinces to consider joining the North American Non-Lead Partnership at a level appropriate to their program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Health Committee encourages the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies directors to adopt this resolution at their annual meeting in 2020.