

February 23, 2024

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chairman
Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee
2 West Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support of SB 983 to phase out lead ammunition

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Please add the Maryland Wildlife Rehabilitators Association to the list of organizations urging your support of SB 983 to phase out the use of lead ammunition in sport hunting in Maryland. As the only professional organization for wildlife rehabilitators in the state of Maryland, we support a wide network of at-home and brick-and-mortar wildlife rehabilitators who are on the front line of identifying and treating animals for lead toxicosis. Vultures and eagles are generally more likely to test positive for lead, but any animal that scavenges is at risk for lead poisoning. We have collectively treated small mammals and turtles for lead toxicosis. There is no such thing as a "safe" lead level in animals, including humans, as you know. Lead poisoning is excruciating and can cause a multitude of symptoms including muscle weakness and incoordination, blindness, deafness, and kidney damage. Suffering can be acute or chronic and, even with rapid diagnosis and treatment, permanent brain damage and eventual death are not uncommon.

We sincerely hope that legislators in the State of Maryland avail themselves of this opportunity to move beyond the mistakes of the past and remove this poison from the environment, where it is a serious threat to wildlife and the natural ecology of our region.

Please pass SB 983.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Woods
President, Maryland Wildlife Rehabilitators Association