

HOUSE BILL 1067

M2

6lr2452

By: **Delegates Guyton and Allen**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2026

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Hunting – Lead and Lead–Based Ammunition – Phase–Out**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Natural Resources to require, through a
4 certain phasing–out process, the use of nonlead ammunition for the hunting of all
5 game species on or before a certain date under certain circumstances; and generally
6 relating to phasing out the use of lead or lead–based ammunition for hunting.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
8 Article – Natural Resources
9 Section 10–408
10 Annotated Code of Maryland
11 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

12 Preamble

13 WHEREAS, The 1991 federal ban on the use of lead ammunition in waterfowl
14 hunting is considered one of the greatest conservation and animal welfare achievements in
15 wildlife management in the last century; and

16 WHEREAS, The federal ban on the use of lead ammunition in waterfowl hunting
17 saves over 1.4 million ducks annually from lead poisoning, enabling larger fall flights of
18 ducks and geese, and increasing opportunities for hunters; and

19 WHEREAS, England, Scotland, and Wales will phase out the use of lead ammunition
20 by 2029 in recognition of the serious cumulative health and environmental impacts on
21 humans and animals; and

22 WHEREAS, Over 500 peer–reviewed studies recognize that there is no safe level of
23 lead exposure for humans; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, Peer-reviewed studies have proven that there is a direct connection
2 between the use of lead ammunition and an increase in health, neurological, emotional,
3 and intellectual deficiencies in humans; and

4 WHEREAS, It has been shown that the shattering of lead ammunition upon striking
5 bone in an animal can spread into dozens of lead fragments that are not readily visible by
6 the naked eye, but are detectable using X-ray technology; and

7 WHEREAS, Over 50,000 deer are killed by firearms in the State annually, and the
8 meat is consumed by hunters and family members; and

9 WHEREAS, Venison is donated in substantial amounts to food banks, and those
10 receiving the donated meat may be unknowingly ingesting lead; and

11 WHEREAS, Wildlife, such as the bald eagle, are being poisoned by ingesting lead
12 particles that are left in abandoned pieces of animal carcasses; now, therefore,

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Natural Resources**

16 10-408.

17 (a) **(1)** In this section[, “handgun”] **THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE**
18 **MEANINGS INDICATED.**

19 **(2)** **“HANDGUN”** means a firearm:

20 **[(1)] (I)** With a barrel length not exceeding 6 inches; and

21 **[(2)] (II)** That does not have a scope or an electronic device attached.

22 **(3)** **“NONLEAD AMMUNITION” INCLUDES:**

23 **(I)** **AMMUNITION IN WHICH THERE IS LESS THAN 1% LEAD**
24 **CONTENT; AND**

25 **(II)** **ANY FEDERALLY APPROVED NONTOXIC AMMUNITION.**

26 (b) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the Department
27 shall:

28 (i) Prescribe by regulation the means or weapons for hunting
29 designated wildlife; and

1 (ii) Set forth any restrictions relating to weapons used to hunt
2 designated wildlife, including the amount [and], size, AND TYPE of ammunition for
3 designated game birds or mammals.

4 (2) The Department may not prohibit a licensed bow hunter from openly
5 carrying a handgun that the hunter is otherwise authorized to carry under § 4–203 of the
6 Criminal Law Article if the bow hunter:

7 (i) Is at least 21 years old;

8 (ii) Is hunting in deer management Region A as defined by the
9 Department’s Guide to Hunting and Trapping;

10 (iii) Is carrying the handgun for personal protection; and

11 (iv) Does not use the handgun to kill wildlife wounded by a vertical
12 bow or crossbow.

13 (c) The Department shall make the regulations available for distribution with
14 each hunting license purchased.

15 (d) This section does not authorize the Department to restrict the use of firearms
16 except in the activity of hunting designated wildlife.

17 **(E) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION,**
18 **ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2029, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REQUIRE THE USE OF**
19 **NONLEAD AMMUNITION FOR THE HUNTING OF ALL GAME SPECIES.**

20 **(2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL AUTHORIZE THE USE OF LEAD**
21 **AMMUNITION FOR MUZZLELOADERS, HANDGUNS, RIFLES, AND SHOTGUNS IF**
22 **NONLEAD AMMUNITION IS NOT COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE FOR THE SPECIFIC**
23 **FIREARM.**

24 **(3) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT**
25 **THIS SUBSECTION.**

26 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

27 (a) On or before July 1, 2027, the Department of Natural Resources shall adopt
28 regulations requiring the use of nonlead ammunition for hunting pen–raised birds on
29 regulated shooting areas.

30 (b) On or before July 1, 2028, the Department of Natural Resources shall adopt
31 regulations requiring the use of nonlead ammunition for hunting:

32 (1) upland game birds;

1 (2) webless migratory game birds; and

2 (3) wild turkey.

3 (c) On or before July 1, 2029, the Department of Natural Resources shall adopt
4 regulations requiring nonlead ammunition for:

5 (1) muzzleloaders, handguns, rifles, and shotguns used for hunting deer;

6 and

7 (2) hunting any other game species not specified in this section.

8 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
9 1, 2026.