



**Senate Bill 983**

*Hunting—Lead and Lead Based Ammunition Phase Out*

Position: **UNF**

Date: **February 26, 2024**

To: **Education, Energy, and  
the Environment**

The Caroline County Commissioners **OPPOSE** SB 983. This bill aims to phase out the use of lead or lead-based ammunition for hunting in Maryland. This bill, while well-intentioned, poses significant challenges and potential negative impacts, particularly for Caroline County, an agricultural community with a robust hunting tradition.

Caroline County is renowned for its agricultural heritage and is home to avid hunters who play a vital role in deer herd management. Hunting is not only a cherished tradition but also a necessary tool for controlling wildlife populations, mitigating human-wildlife conflicts, and protecting crop production. Unfortunately, Senate Bill 983 threatens to undermine these efforts and jeopardize the delicate balance between wildlife management and agricultural sustainability.

One of the primary concerns with the proposed phase-out of lead ammunition is the potential increase in deer populations, which could have detrimental effects on crop production and exacerbate human-wildlife conflicts. Maryland is already facing extreme challenges with human-wildlife conflicts, including deer-vehicle collisions and crop depredation.

Phasing out lead ammunition would limit the effectiveness of hunters in managing deer populations, leading to increased crop damage and safety risks on roadways. It is important to note that revenues from hunting licenses directly fund the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which is tasked with managing wildlife populations and mitigating human-wildlife conflicts. Decreased hunting participation resulting from the phase-out of lead ammunition would lead to decreased revenue for the DNR, impairing its ability to fulfill its mandate effectively.

The Commissioners respectfully urge an unfavorable report on SB 983, due to its potential impacts on Caroline County and other rural communities across Maryland.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding, President