



February 23, 2024

Senator Karen Lewis Young  
Maryland State Senator, District 3  
302 James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Senator Lewis Young,

On behalf of Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research, I wanted to thank you for your sponsorship of SB 983. Tri-State is a non-profit organization located in Newark, Delaware who for almost 50 years has been providing expert medical care, housing, and diets to injured, orphaned, and oiled native wild birds. We are one of the premier rehabilitation centers in the United States.

While located in Delaware, our close proximity to Maryland allows our dedicated team of professional staff and volunteers to respond to the needs of injured native wild birds in your state. We have unfortunately witnessed first-hand the impact that the use of lead and lead based ammunition has on the native wild birds of Maryland. Since 2016, 74 birds were found in Maryland and brought to our clinic suffering from or succumbing to complications from lead poisoning.

For decades we have seen firsthand the fatal effects of ingested lead in birds, particularly Bald Eagles. Sometimes, we can successfully treat these birds and return them to life in the wild. Yet, the majority of them, unfortunately cannot be saved. Below is a chart representing each bird mentioned above, along with the outcome of their case:

Maryland Birds Treated for Lead Poisoning Since Sept 2016					
Species	Admitted	Died	Euthanized	Released	Pending
Bald Eagle	53	16	25	12	
Turkey Vulture	6	2	3	1	
Black Vulture	4		2	2	
Mallard	2	1		1	
Snow Goose	2	1	1		
American Kestrel	1	1			
Common Loon	1	1			
Glossy Ibis	1	1			
Herring Gull	1		1		
Red Tailed Hawk	1			1	
Ringbilled Gull	1	1			
Tundra Swan	1				1
<b>Totals</b>	74	24	32	17	1

This correlates to a 77.1% mortality rate; 73% for Bald Eagles when lead poisoning has occurred. We also have data that shows us that 70% of the Bald Eagles instances happened between October and February – which coincides with hunting seasons for deer and upland game for which lead ammunition is permitted.

We hope that you will share this letter of support with your colleagues as they consider their position on this bill. It is clear from the small data set I present here that our wildlife will benefit immensely from a change to non-lead ammunition.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions, need clarification or more data on our relevant cases.

With Appreciation,

Autumn Reiter  
Executive Director