



PUBLIC EMPLOYEES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

962 Wayne Ave • Suite 610 • Silver Spring, MD 20910

### **Testimony on Maryland Senate Bill 983**

Good afternoon. My name is Colleen Teubner, and I am a Staff Attorney with Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, or PEER for short, headquartered in Silver Spring, MD. Thank you for this opportunity to be heard on Senate Bill 983. I am here today to strongly support Senator Young's effort to phase out the use of lead and lead-based ammunition for hunting in the State of Maryland.

PEER supports current and former public employees who seek a higher standard of environmental ethics and scientific integrity within their agencies. The effects of lead ammunition on wildlife and human health are a major concern of the current and retired wildlife officials we work with nationally and in Maryland.

For example, spent shot pellets in water, on the ground, and in unrecovered game expose waterbirds, ground-foraging birds, and predatory

birds to lead. Additionally, scavenging animals are exposed to lead through bullet fragments in discarded animal remains.<sup>1</sup>

Humans are exposed in several ways, including ingestion of lead dust, ammunition fragments, and shot pellets in harvested meat and through inhalation of lead dust during ammunition reloading.

Our government contacts are concerned about these pathways to lead exposure due to lead's toxicity to humans and wildlife.

The science is settled - lead is a metabolic poison that, when ingested, attacks organs and many different body systems, including the blood-forming, nervous, urinary, and reproductive systems. Studies show that cumulative lead exposure over time can cause adverse health impacts, while high, limited exposure to lead can be lethal. Simply put, there is no safe level of lead in the human body.<sup>2</sup>

Although lead has been banned from many industries, lead based ammunition is one of the few remaining sources for new lead being introduced into the environment.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://naturalresources.extension.iastate.edu/wildlife/lead-contamination-wildlife>

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS). 1999. Toxicological Profile for Lead. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp13.pdf/>.

Neither politics nor cost should be a guiding principle for public health and safety. Instead, the State of Maryland should set an example and protect its residents and public lands from a known toxic substance. For these reasons, this Committee should vote in support of Senate Bill 983.

Thank you.