

Date: March 4, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair

Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB 634 – Hunting - Nonlead Ammunition, et cet. - FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paula Goldberg. I am a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in the state of Maryland. I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Maryland Wildlife Rehabilitators Association. We serve on the front lines of wildlife health and care for sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife year round.

On December 5, 2017, 11 days into the fire-arms deer season, City Wildlife in Washington DC – where I was then the Executive Director – received a call from a MD DNR wildlife technician.

A downed Bald Eagle had been found in some woods, about 100 feet from a road in Nanjemoy, MD (Charles County). City Wildlife was the closest wildlife rehab location where the bird could be triaged and evaluated by a wildlife veterinarian.

On intake, the eagle was alert, feisty, but it was falling over on its left side in the carrier. It was unable to stand. It was "neurologic".

Although its weight and body condition were reasonable, its blood lead level was in the moderately elevated range. Diagnosis? Lead toxicosis.

The eagle received fluids and medications for severe pain. Lead chelation therapy was begun.

We were optimistic about this bird's prognosis, but it succumbed within 48 hours. The likely source of this eagle's lead poisoning was lead shot from deer gut piles, left by hunters who used lead ammunition which the eagle scavenged.

So, within 11 days of the opening of firearms deer hunting season, this eagle ingested a lethal dose of lead. It was poisoned. It was unable to stand, unable to fly, and unable to escape capture.

Mercifully, its journey ended in a quiet, safe place where its pain was managed.

The end-of life story for this magnificent bird, the emblem of our nation, was made into a teachable moment.

The news of its demise was carried by multiple news outlets including DC's NPR-affiliate, WAMU, the Washington Post, and National Geographic.

Please vote to phase out lead ammunition used for hunting. Please vote for SB 634.

Paula Goldberg (she/her)

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"Instructions for living a life:

Pay attention.

Be astonished.

Tell about it."

--Mary Oliver