

# SB 0634 Non Lead Ammunition

## OPPOSE SB0634

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Committee Members,

I have been a Maryland hunter for decades; I am a member of Deer management with 2 counties, and a DNR trained Maryland Hunter Education instructor.

### **Key Take Aways**

- You can eliminate all perceived lead contamination from deer hunting by having the hunters remove/bury the gut pile when they remove the entire deer from the woods. This is a No Cost solution to the cash strapped state.
- There is no Lead free ammo for the .22 Rimfire , this would end small game hunting with a 22 rifle
- Traditional muzzle loaders, many straight wall cartridge rifles and rifles older than 1975 will not shoot copper accurately and/or safely.
- High powered Rifles (11 counties) and shotguns slugs (the rest of the counties) work "ok" with copper projectiles and could easily be voluntarily transitioned to copper, eliminating 60-80% of lead used in MD hunting.
- I personally now shoot copper ammo in my 20ga slug gun and modern 45-70 rifle, as I have found copper based ammunition that works in these guns, this reduces my lead use by over 80%. This decision is based on my own research and education.

### **Summary:**

- Bald Eagles in the Chesapeake region have gone from ~60 breeding pairs in 1970s to over 3000 pairs in 2020, in fact They are at or above carrying capacity in many areas.
- Lead is present in the paints of the bay's bridges and structures, industrial run off, Gizzard shad, Blue catfish and many other fish that Eagles eat and the sediment of the bay. There has been no Maryland study showing a connection between hunting and lead poisoning of Raptors.

- Maryland hunters remove the entire deer from the woods after shooting it, currently only the gut pile is left,, a simple solution to alleviate contamination fears would be to bury the gut pile or remove it with the deer,, That simple step would 100% ensure there was no chance of lead left behind. **If this simple step is not considered over banning lead ammo for deer hunting,, it shows the true intent of this legislation.**

- A lead ban, would be a ban on small game hunting with a 22 rifle. There is currently no lead free alternative being manufactured. Many companies have introduced a lead free 22 bullets, and quickly discontinued them as they do not function properly in most 22 rifles. There is nothing indicating that hunting small game with a 22 rifle is a source of lead poisoning to other animals.

Lead bullets do not fragment moving at the slow speeds of the typical 22 rimfire.

- A lead ban would be a ban on many Traditional Muzzle loading rifles used in the primitive season, as they require a soft lead round ball.

- A lead ban would be a ban many older deer rifles. Copper bullets require a longer bullet at higher velocities; many older rifles have barrels that have a slower twist that will not stabilize copper bullets.

- A lead ban would ban a few modern deer rifles as the copper rounds will not produce the required energy (Foot/Pounds) required by law to deer hunt in Maryland – Such as the 357 and 44mag lever guns that are now popular.

- Those pushing these “Lead Hunting Bans” have offered no legislation to clean up the industrial, commercial, governmental heavy metal (Lead) pollution in the Chesapeake Bay. This legislation has nothing to do about lead, but all to do about reducing hunting.

- Last year (2024) I testified on this lead ban in the MD Senate (SB983), in the days after my testimony I was in phone and email discussions (with the authors and promoters of the lead ban) about the reduction of lead in hunting. I offered ideas and ways to reduce the use of lead by up to 80% without banning and putting undue hardship on hunters, In the end They had no interest in that. They only wanted a total ban,, showing this is not about lead reduction, but reducing hunting participation in Maryland.

- Education is key, Western states have had a reduction in the use of lead based ammo (where it is feasible) through Education, outreach, and incentives. Maryland has not even attempted The education route,, as that is not the goal of this legislation.

### **Details:**

As noted above, The Bald Eagle population in the Chesapeake region has gone from ~60 breeding pairs in 1970s to over 3000 pair in 2020.

(The following are clips from a “Bay Journal article and WTOP Melissa Howell interview) According to Bryan Watts, founder and director of the Center for Conservation Biology at Virginia’s College of William and Mary, who has authored dozens of academic papers on bald eagles over a more than 30-year career:

*“Eagles have shown themselves to be more adaptable than we expected,” But now, he says, they seem to be running out of room in the Bay region. The most notable consequence has been the growing population of so-called “floaters,” breeding-age eagles of either sex with no territory of their own. The crowding has become so intense that researchers now believe that the floater population is six to eight times greater than the breeding population. Breeding males that do have nests and mates find themselves at near-constant threat of losing them to intruders. “These things can be bloody fights to the death”. “It’s a jungle out there for these birds.” “Food supply for eagles hasn’t been able to keep up and infighting has become common, the professor said. Watts added that the population began to reach its limits”. “The young were starving in the nest,”*

As I noted in the Summary, Lead is present in many aspects of the Chesapeake Bay, It is in the sediment base, it is in the fish the Eagles eat, A major source is the paint in the bridges over/around the bay, often where Eagles perch/nest, It comes from runoff from active industrial sites and military installations that are prevalent in the bay region.

Eagles exposure to lead is NOT from hunters.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30698866/>

-22 Rim fire rifle ammo.

Another year passed since we last visited this subject ,, There were 3) .22 rimfire “non lead” cartridges made in the last few years. ALL have been discontinued. They were CCI Copper, CCI Meat Eater and Norma Eco speed/Power.

They all failed because they were highly inaccurate and ineffective, they did not expand and were traveling to fast for commercially available 22 rifles.

The physics do not work when down scaling and will not work.



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Sent: Wed 2/26/2025 6:25 PM

To: nickandraka@verizon.net

Nicholas,

CCI Copper 22 was discontinued about 2 years ago.

Thanks,



Ammunition / Rifle Ammunition / 22 Long Rifle

## Norma Eco Speed-22 22LR Ammo 24 Grain Plated Flat Nose

★★★★★ (12) Write a Review Q&A (1)

Product Family #: 1023689723



Our Price: ~~\$4.99~~ - ~~\$174.99~~  
(\$0.10 - \$0.35 per round)  
Discontinued  
Select Quantity:   
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## CCI Copper-22 Ammunition 22 Long Rifle 21 Grain Copper Hollow Point Lead-Free

★★★★☆ (62) Write a Review Q&A (7)



Product Family #: 953365521

List Price: \$144.99 - \$1499.00  
Our Price: ~~\$11.99~~ - ~~\$1207.99~~  
(\$0.24 - \$0.54 per round)

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### CCI 22LR 21gr Copper-22 MEATEATER Copper Polymer HP Ammo

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UPC:	604544617467
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Availability:	Currently Out Of Stock

**\$11.95**

- Marylands “primitive deer season” makes use of traditional muzzle loading rifles,, these rifles will only function with soft lead round balls. This legislation would ban these weapons.

- Some older rifle such as 3030, 35rem, 44m lever action have a slower twist roughly 1:38,, while newer guns rifles of these calibers have a faster 1:20 twist rate. The slower twist rate will not stabilize the longer copper bullet.

- Some MD legal rifle calibers just make it energy wise with a lead projectile, with the larger copper bullet, there is less room for gunpowder in the cartridge and the bullet will not have the energy to make a clean, ethical kill. (357M, 44mag)

Maryland deer regulations require a rifle/ammo produce a minimum energy of 1200 FT/LB of energy, I personally will not shoot a deer with less than 1500 FT/LB.

Some of the more popular SWC Lever action rifles bought by MD hunters do not have a copper ammo that meets this min requirement.

I purchased a Henry 44m lever action rifle last year (\$1200),

There is only 1 commercially available 44 copper base ammo that is advertised to meet the 1200 FT/LB min. (that min is marginal, 1500 is my bottom), And that bullet is to light in weight at 162 grain (vs 240g standard) , most of the copper based 44m ammo is advertised at 900-1000 FT/LB. Same goes with 357m rifles.

It is physically impossible for a copper bullet to achieve the energy levels in these carbine cartridges. And if they did, they would not expand to transfer that energy.

- Shotguns and larger Straight Wall Cartridge (SWC) rifles: do to the size of these cartridges, there is limited manufacture of copper based cartridges that adequately function in them, They are expensive and of limited supply. They will not work in every shotgun/rifle,, but many hunters I know use them for personal reasons.

- High Powered centerfire rifles: in the MD counties that allow High Powered Rifles, many hunters are using/switched to solid copper bullets, as at these high speeds and power they do function as good as lead based bullets.

- As I laid out above,, any possibility of lead contamination in deer hunting, can be 100% eliminated by removing the gut pile with the deer.

.22 Rimfire will never function properly without a lead bullet.

There are many cases where copper solid bullets will work fine for deer hunting.

Copper works fine for High powered rifles used in 11 counties, and works “ok” with shotgun slugs used in the remaining counties. If these weapons transitioned to copper, that would cover 60-80% of lead used in hunting.

I suggest Maryland work on adding Education and outreach to easily reduce hunter lead use by over 50%

**For these reasons I OPPOSE SB0634**

Nicholas Andraka