



### **Senate Bill 634**

### **Hunting – Nonlead Ammunition, Fox Chasing, and Deer Management UNFAVORABLE**

Senate Bill 634, while similar to non-toxic legislation passed in California, is far more expansive in scope. Our opposition to Senate Bill 634 should not be construed to stem from a lack of concern for the environment or wildlife. It is based upon practical technical concerns and logistics issues, plus the bill language which places excessive and arbitrary power in the hands of an appointed official.

The provisions in this bill will make it difficult and expensive for many deer hunters in Maryland to continue to hunt deer. The net result will be fewer Maryland citizens hunting deer in Maryland. Hunting is a critical hunter funded component of the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) overall mandate to promote wildlife conservation by maintaining a balance between wildlife population and the available habitat.

The ecology and terrain of Maryland is quite different than that in California. Accordingly, the type of firearms and cartridges used are also different. In Maryland, most deer are taken in heavy brush and timber at ranges under 100 yards. Hunters use short, easy to maneuver firearms chambered for firearms with an effective range of approximately 150 yards.

Two of the most popular cartridges, the .30-30 Winchester and the .35 Remington have origins dating back to 1895 and 1906 respectively. Due to their geriatric vintage, the designers never envisioned, much less designed these popular cartridges, to utilize the new non-lead projectiles. There are technical limitations involved which limit which projectiles can successfully employed. Consequently, ammunition manufacturers have no incentive to produce non-lead ammunition for these cartridges because the customer's firearms cannot effectively use them. With no viable market for their products, the net result is no factory loaded non-lead ammunition, which in turn means fewer hunters, fewer hunting licenses, reduced revenue and increased pressure on the DNR's limited resources to control Maryland's wildlife population.

My research has identified one source for non-lead .35 caliber bullets in the appropriate weight. The manufacturer's data does not reveal the muzzle velocity the bullet is designed for. However, it does indicate the recommended rifling rate of twist is 1/10 or 1 revolution in 10" of barrel length. The standard twist rate for factory barrels in .35 Remington is 1/16

or 1 revolution in 16" of barrel length. In short, this bullet is not suitable for the .35 Remington cartridge.

The foregoing presumes the hunter is also someone who is experienced and equipped to "hand load" non-lead ammunition. Even then, the challenge is to find reliable information on the appropriate combination of powder type and quantity, primer, and case to produce ammunition which is reliable, accurate and above all else, safe in the type of firearm for which it will be used.

The question of finding ammunition for hunting handguns only compounds the problem.

Section §10-214 (D) establishes a deer management program with an addition full-time paid position. This provision will place additional financial pressure on the DNR at a time when Maryland is facing an enormous budget deficit. It is unlikely the revenue from hunting licenses from fox chasing will be sufficient to fund the additional personnel required to maintain a viable program.

Section §410 (Q) (1) exempts those persons participating in unarmed fox chasing from the hunter safety training requirements of §10-301.1(A)(1), while Section §410 (Q) (2) requires the participants to possess a resident or non-resident full season hunting license.

SB 634 does not address the fact that the DNR does not currently have a protocol for issuing full season fox chasing licenses as a separate license type. Nor does it have a means for DNR officers to determine in the field whether a person who is hunting other game is doing so with a permit which "bypassed" the hunter safety course requirement contained in §10-301.1.

Until and unless the spectrum of factory-loaded ammunition becomes adequate to make a ban on non-lead ammunition practical, and provisions are made to address the hunting license issue, we must recommend an unfavorable report on SB 634.

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2A Maryland  
03/04/2025

Attachments:       Natural Resources §10-301.1  
                          Hunting Zone Map  
                          Maker copper bullet info

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§10-301.1.

(a) (1) (i) On or after July 1, 1977, a person under 18 years of age may not procure a hunting license or hunt in the State, unless the person has first been issued a certificate of competency in firearms and hunter safety.

(ii) On or after July 1, 1977, a person, regardless of age, may not procure a hunting license without producing a certificate of competency or a hunting license issued before July 1, 1977, or making out an affidavit that the person hunted before July 1, 1977.

(2) (i) This section does not apply to nonresidents of Maryland who purchase a nonresident 3-day hunting license in the State to hunt wild waterfowl.

(ii) This section applies to nonresidents of Maryland who purchase hunting licenses in the State to hunt wildlife other than wild waterfowl.

(b) (1) The Department shall prescribe a course of instruction in conservation and in competency and safety in the handling of firearms.

(2) (i) The Department shall designate those persons or agencies authorized to give the course of instruction, and this designation shall be valid until revoked by the Department.

(ii) Those designated persons shall submit to the Department validated listings naming all persons who have successfully completed the course of instruction.

(3) The Department shall issue a certificate of competency and safety to each person who successfully completes the course of instruction, and the certificate shall be valid until revoked by the Department.

(4) The Department may not issue a certificate of competency and safety to an individual under the age of 18 unless the individual has completed satisfactorily the course of instruction, or produces a certificate of competency or a hunting license issued prior to July 1, 1978, or makes out an affidavit that the individual had such a license.

(c) (1) The Department shall institute and coordinate a statewide course of instruction in conservation and in competency and safety in the handling of firearms, and in so doing, the Department may cooperate with any political subdivision or with any reputable organization having as one of its objectives the promotion of competency and safety in the handling of firearms, such as the National Rifle Association and local rod and gun clubs.

(2) The Department may conduct the course in hunter safety and issue the certificates, using Department personnel or other persons at times and in areas where other competent agencies are unable or unwilling to meet the demand for instruction.

(3) Any similar certificate, or hunting license, issued outside the State by a governmental agency, shall be accepted as complying with the requirements of paragraph (1) of this subsection, if the privileges are reciprocal for Maryland residents.

(d) The Department shall adopt regulations to provide for the course of instruction and the issuance of the certificates consistent with the purpose of this section.

(e) (1) On or after July 1, 1977, any person who obtains a hunting license by presenting a fictitious certificate of competency or who attempts to obtain a certificate of competency or hunting license through fraud shall have his hunting privileges revoked by the Department for a period not to exceed 1 year.

(2) Any applicant who is refused a certificate of competency under this section may appeal the decision or action of the issuing unit to the Secretary.

(f) (1) The Department or a person designated by the Department may issue a 1-year gratis hunting license to a Maryland resident under the age of 16 years who has successfully completed a hunter safety course.

(2) A hunting license issued under this subsection shall include all applicable hunting stamps, except for migratory game bird stamps and bonus deer stamps.

(3) An individual may be issued only one such license during the individual's lifetime.

(g) (1) The Department or a person designated by the Department shall issue a complimentary hunting license each year to an individual who:

(i) Has been authorized by the Department to give the course of instruction in conservation and in competency and safety in the handling of firearms under subsection (b) of this section;

(ii) Has completed at least 5 years of service as an instructor of this course;

(iii) Maintains active certification as an instructor of this course;

(iv) Has taught two hunter safety courses during the fiscal year preceding the issuance of the license; and

(v) Has indicated to the Department an interest in receiving a complimentary hunting license.

(2) A hunting license issued under this subsection shall include all applicable hunting stamps, except for migratory game bird stamps and bonus deer stamps.

(h) (1) The Department may adopt regulations to establish a program to provide incentives for the successful completion of a hunter safety course by an individual who is not required by law to complete a hunter safety course.

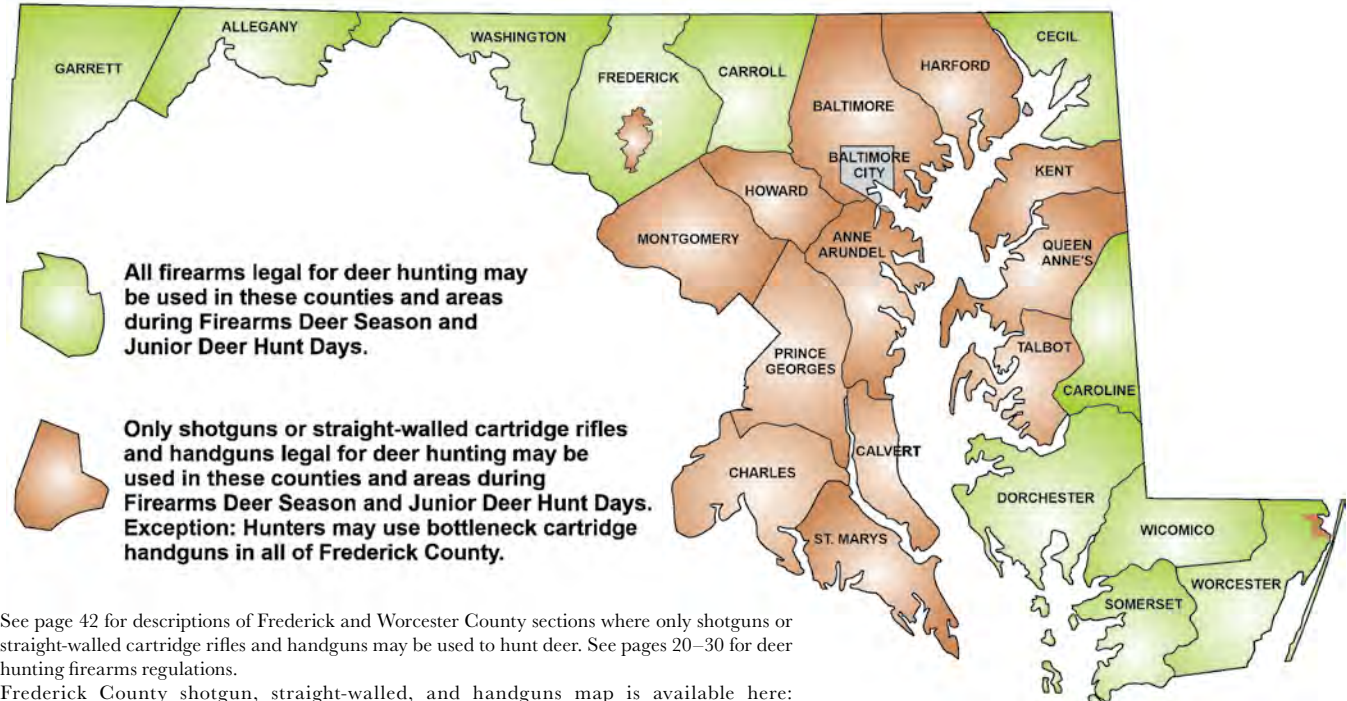
(2) The program may include:

(i) Discounts on hunting licenses; and

(ii) Any other incentive the Department determines to be appropriate.

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## DESIGNATED RIFLE, SHOTGUN AND HANDGUN COUNTIES AND AREAS FOR FIREARMS SEASON DEER HUNTING



See page 42 for descriptions of Frederick and Worcester County sections where only shotguns or straight-walled cartridge rifles and handguns may be used to hunt deer. See pages 20–30 for deer hunting firearms regulations.

Frederick County shotgun, straight-walled, and handguns map is available here:  
[https://dnr.maryland.gov/Wildlife/Pages/hunt\\_trap/FredCty\\_DeerHuntingZones.aspx](https://dnr.maryland.gov/Wildlife/Pages/hunt_trap/FredCty_DeerHuntingZones.aspx)



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