



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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March 4, 2025

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Hunting - Nonlead Ammunition, Fox Chasing, and Deer Management– SB 634 – Support

Chair Feldman, Vice - Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chair of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Hunting - Nonlead Ammunition, Fox Chasing, and Deer Management– SB 634.

This bill would phase out the use of toxic lead ammunition for the hunting of all game species in Maryland by July 1, 2029. It would also make some definition changes of “hunt” to include fox chasing and establish the Deer Management Assistance program in the Department of Natural Resources.

Lead and lead-based ammunition have been studied extensively for over 100 years because of lead’s negative impacts on wildlife and humans. Numerous species of wildlife that are found in Maryland are poisoned by lead bullets and shells including hawks, ravens, turkey vultures, eagles, and grizzly bears.

Lead causes widespread damage to cells and organs when it is ingested, inhaled, or absorbed in surprisingly small quantities. Lead fragments have been found in wild game meat processed for human consumption. Even if a hunter attempts to remove the largest remaining pieces of the bullet from the dead animal, tiny fragments of lead, enough to poison both humans and wildlife, remain in both the meat and parts that are left behind.

Hunters can use alternatives to lead in shot and rifle bullets. These include steel, copper, bismuth, and tungsten. Research has shown that they are as effective as lead but with the significant advantage that they are not toxic. We must factor in the environmental impacts of using lead ammunition and transition to safer alternatives.

It’s time to get the lead out!

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Lewis Young for her sponsorship of SB 634 and ask the committee for a favorable report.