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**February 28, 2025**

**Honorable Members of the  
Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Md. 21401**

**Subject: SB-0634 Hunting – Nonlead Ammunition, Fox Chasing, and Deer Management**

**UNFAVORABLE (As Written)**

**Honorable Senators:**

**I represent the Western Maryland Sportsmen's Coalition, Inc. The Coalition is comprised of many hunting clubs and sportsmen's associations and thousands of their individual members living in Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Frederick, and Carroll Counties. As President of the Coalition, I work together with the leadership of these Western Maryland Sportsmen's organizations for the recognition and benefit of the sportsmen and sportswomen of the five most western counties of Maryland.**

**On March 4, 2025, the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee will be hearing the advantages and disadvantages of SB-0634 - Hunting – Nonlead Ammunition, Fox Chasing, and Deer Management**

**I, as a private citizen of this state and as the elected representative of the Western Maryland Sportsmen's Coalition, Inc., strongly urge you to vote unfavorably on this bill as written.**

**Nonlead Ammunition:**

- We request that the deadline for mandatory nonlead ammunition use for hunting be extended by at least one year for each of the four categories. There are several reasons for this request: Many of our hunters have a large monetary investment in personal inventories of various calibers, weights, gauges and shot sizes of lead ammunition. They**

would like the opportunity to utilize this ammunition hunting game rather than having that invested money go to waste sitting in a closet. In addition, nonlead ammunition, especially copper, is more expensive and not yet available in all calibers, comparable weights and dynamics as current lead ammunition. Further, older shotguns (which are many) have softer barrels that cannot handle steel or shot harder than lead. Those firearms will become useless as hunting instruments, forcing the purchase of newer, more expensive firearms. A little more transition time would be very helpful.

**Hunting License Requirement for Unarmed Fox Chasing:**

- While we do not object to the concept of requiring those participating in unarmed fox chasing to purchase a "hunting license", we are concerned over the exemption of such persons from the requirement to obtain a certificate of competency in firearms and hunter safety before obtaining a hunting license. We propose that the hunting license issued to those engaged in unarmed fox chasing be somehow marked or identified as valid for unarmed fox chasing only. If it is not identified as such, what would prohibit someone with this license from engaging in any type of firearms hunting (deer or small game, for example) without the proper competency and hunter safety instruction?

**Together with the sportsmen and sportswomen of Western Maryland, we strongly urge you to vote against SB-0634 as written.**

Respectfully,

*Ben Kelkys*

President

Western Maryland Sportsmen's Coalition, Inc.

Ben Kelkys	President, WMSC, President Frederick County Sportsmen's Council
Jerry Zembower	President, Garrett & Allegany Sportsmen's Association
Joe Winter	President, Washington County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
Matt Guilfoyle	President, Carroll County Sportsmen's Association

Garrett

Allegany

Washington

Frederick

Carroll