



HB 741

Hunting – Nonlead Ammunition, Fox Chasing, and Deer Management

UNFAVORABLE

The Maryland State Rifle & Pistol Association (MSRPA) opposes HB 741.

Hunters are the backbone of the conservation movement. They rely on a healthy environment for their sport and the means to feed their families.

Yet, anti-hunting groups and gun control supporters want lead ammunition banned for hunting. They attack hunting season after season and would continue doing so until all traditional ammunition and hunting were banned within the United States. The President and CEO of the Humane Society of the United States, Wayne Pacelle, has been quoted as saying: "We are going to use the ballot box and the democratic process to stop all hunting in the United States. We will take it species by species until all hunting is stopped in California. Then we will take it state by state."

In the United States, wildlife experts do not manage wildlife based on single mortality incidents or emotions. Our country's wildlife management practices are based on the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which is widely recognized as the best in the world. For more than a century, wildlife in the United States has been successfully managed through this model and has led to an incredible restoration of multiple species. The so-called "facts" provided by gun control activists and anti-hunting gurus do not use specific peer-reviewed scientific data.

The traditional ammunition used in North America for the past 400 years has never led to one case of an individual suffering lead poisoning due to the consumption of wild game taken with lead ammunition. Studies conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2008 found that blood-lead levels in hunters consuming wild game harvested using traditional ammunition were actually lower than individuals in the same community that didn't consume wild game.

Lead bans would require alternative products that would be more expensive (on average – 25% more expensive) and less available. Many calibers of rifles, for example .22 caliber ammunition, which are used to introduce many new and young people to hunting are not commercially available.

Most importantly, such a ban has no peer-reviewed, supportable scientific data that shows that lead ammunition causes significant and measurable impacts on wildlife populations. In fact, the science shows that wildlife populations have never been healthier in America. Hunters must be free to choose the ammunition that will best serve their needs for the ethical and efficient harvesting of wildlife.

Hunters are America's original conservationists. They have helped contribute more than \$27 billion, when adjusted for inflation, in Pittman-Robertson excise taxes to the Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund since 1937, and over 90% of this funding is directly from the sale of firearms and ammunition. The Trust Fund benefits all by supporting wildlife conservation efforts that encourage abundant wildlife and habitat restoration along with access to public lands for hunters, anglers, recreationists, and other outdoor enthusiasts. Maryland has benefited from the Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund and it would be a shame to lose these benefits.

The Maryland State Rifle & Pistol Association respectfully requests an UNFAVORABLE report on HB 741.

Thank you for your consideration.

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The MSRPA is the official National Rifle Association state organization for Maryland. The MSRPA's mission is to defend your rights in Maryland, support training in firearm safety and shooting skills through its affiliated clubs, and sponsor and sanction local competition throughout the state.