



DEPARTMENT OF MICROBIOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL TOXICOLOGY
DIVISION OF NATURAL SCIENCE
1156 HIGH ST
SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chairman, Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

01/28/26

Re: SB 181 – Lead Ammunition – Phase-Out – FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee:

We, Dr. Donald Smith and Dr. Myra Finkelstein are renowned experts in the fields of human, wildlife, and environmental health with over 50 years of combined experience and over 150 peer-reviewed published research papers related to lead exposure and toxicity. Further, our work was instrumental in informing and supporting the passage of two legislative bills in California (AB 821 and AB 711) that led to the partial and subsequent full banning of lead-based ammunition for hunting in California.

We strongly support SB 181, Hunting - Lead and Lead-Based Ammunition - Phase-Out, under current consideration by the Maryland Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee.

We applaud the effort to increase the use of non-lead ammunition for hunting, knowing that this will lead to a decrease in the risk of lead exposure to humans and wildlife because:

- The discharge of lead-based ammunition and accumulation of spent lead-based ammunition in the environment poses significant health risks to humans and wildlife.
- The discharge of lead into the environment, via the use of lead-based ammunition for hunting, remains one of the most significant and largely unregulated sources of lead contamination.
- Lead is among the most well-studied anthropogenic toxins, and there is overwhelming scientific evidence that demonstrates lead is toxic to multiple physiological systems in vertebrate organisms, including the central and peripheral nervous, renal, cardiovascular, reproductive, immune, and hematologic systems.

In particular, our research has shown that:

- Avian wildlife scavengers (e.g., Bald Eagles, California Condors, New Zealand Kea) are poisoned from ingestion of lead-based ammunition from feeding on contaminated carcasses and remains discarded in the environment. Other studies have shown a similar lead exposure pathway to additional species of wildlife, including mountain lions, due to the use of lead-based ammunition in hunting.
- The lead ammunition bans in California (AB 821, AB 711) have reduced California Condor lead poisoning risk, demonstrating the efficacy of legislation requiring non-lead ammunition for hunting to protect wildlife health.

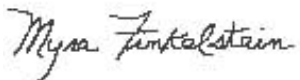
Thus, we respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 181.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a stylized "S".

Donald Smith, PhD
Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Microbiology and Environmental Toxicology
University of California
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Myra Finkelstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a stylized "F".

Myra Finkelstein, PhD
Adjunct Professor of Microbiology and Environmental Toxicology
University of California
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