



Bill: SB181 Hunting-Lead and Lead-Based Ammunition-Phase Out

Position: Informational

Date: February 3, 2026

Contact: Debra Borden, General Counsel

Jordan Baucum Colbert, Senior Government Affairs Analyst

Dear Chair J. Sandy Bartlett,

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (“M-NCPPC” or the “Commission”) to provide information on this bill.

What this Bill Does. This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to require, through a certain phasing-out process, the use of nonlead ammunition for the hunting of all game species on or before a certain date under certain circumstances. The Commission foresees potential impacts on our programs, and most notably sharp-shaped programs. The bill permits DNR to decide when lead-based ammunition is “unavailable”- but no assurances.

Challenging Impact on Sharp Shooting Operations. M-NCPPC manages extensive parklands in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. Our enabling legislation grants the Commission’s Park Police departments supervisory concurrent police jurisdiction over Commission properties and programs. Toward that end, for many years our elected officials and other partners in county government have strongly supported our deer management programs in direct response to the county residents expressed concerns about the danger of deer-vehicle collisions in both counties.

The Commission’s Montgomery Park Police range master has researched available alternative ammunition and spoke with several ammunition sales representatives about lead-free replacements for sharp shooting purposes. He was only able to find one manufactured round in Winchester (38 gr zinc core) that was comparable to what we currently use, and this ammunition is rarely manufactured if at all. As it stands, finding comparable lead-free ammunition may be a challenge, which can have an impact on the Commission’s ability to maintain current deer management operations.

Suggested Considerations

10-408 (E) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2029, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REQUIRE THE USE OF NONLEAD AMMUNITION FOR THE HUNTING OF ALL GAME SPECIES.

- The sponsor should consider waiving or phasing out the date regarding available ammunition.

10-408 (E)(2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL AUTHORIZE THE USE OF LEAD AMMUNITION FOR MUZZLELOADERS, HANDGUNS, RIFLES, AND SHOTGUNS IF NONLEAD AMMUNITION IS NOT COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE FOR THE SPECIFIC WEAPON

- The sponsor should consider defining “commercially available” using the terms “readily available or similarly available.”