

February 3, 2026

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

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

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Valery Feigin. I am a Professor of Neurology, a licensed stroke physician, and Director of the National Institute for Stroke and Applied Neurosciences at Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand. I am also an Affiliate Professor of the University of Washington; Principal Collaborator of the Global Burden of Disease Study of the Institute for Health Metrics (IHME) and Evaluation of the University of Washington; Full Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand and American Academy of Neurology; member of the World Health Organization (WHO) Technical Advisory Group and member of the WHO on NCD-related Research and Innovation; Visiting Professor, Capital Medical University, China; and Editor-in-Chief of the international journal of Neuroepidemiology.

I strongly support SB 181, the phase-out of lead ammunition for hunting, based on clear scientific and public-health evidence. The key points are as follows:

- Lead is a cumulative toxic metal with no safe level of exposure. It causes irreversible harm to the brain and cardiovascular system and is recognised by the WHO as a major, entirely preventable environmental health risk.¹
- According to the Global Burden of Disease 2023 Study,² led by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, lead exposure remains a major cause of preventable disease and death worldwide. It is responsible for an estimated 3.5 million deaths and more than 73 million healthy life years lost (disability-adjusted life years lost [DALYs]) globally, including nearly 88,000 deaths and 1.6 million DALYs in the United States.
- The link between lead exposure and stroke is well established.³ Lead raises blood pressure, damages blood vessels, accelerates atherosclerosis, and increases stroke risk.⁴
- Lead ammunition is a preventable source of exposure. Fired bullets and shot fragment and contaminate game meat with microscopic lead particles that cannot be reliably removed.^{5,6}
- Phasing out lead ammunition is a practical primary-prevention measure.⁷ Safe and effective non-lead alternatives already exist.⁸
- Passing SB 181 would protect the health of Maryland residents and position Maryland as a public-health leader, setting an example for other states and countries working to pass similar evidence-based legislation.

Sincerely,

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