

## **Testimony on Maryland Senate Bill 181**

Good afternoon. My name is Dorje Wu, and I am a Law Clerk with Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, or PEER for short. Thank you for this opportunity to be heard on Senate Bill 181. I am here today to strongly support Senator Young's effort to phase out the use of lead and lead-based ammunition for hunting in Maryland.

PEER is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Silver Spring, MD that supports current and former public employees who seek a higher standard of environmental ethics and scientific integrity within their agencies. The effects of lead ammunition on wildlife and human health are a major concern of the current and retired wildlife officials we work with nationally and in Maryland.

The science is settled: there is no safe level of lead in the human body. Lead is a metabolic poison that attacks many different organs and body systems, including the blood-forming, nervous, urinary, and reproductive systems. For humans and animals alike, studies show that cumulative lead exposure over time can cause adverse health impacts, while high, limited exposure to lead can be lethal. Based on the abundant scientific literature

about lead's toxicity, our government contacts are concerned about the pathways of lead exposure to humans and wildlife.

Spent shot pellets expose birds to lead, and scavenging animals can consume bullet fragments in discarded animal remains.

Humans are exposed in several ways, including the ingestion of lead in harvested meat and the inhalation of lead dust during ammunition reloading.

Although lead has been banned from many industries, lead based ammunition is one of the few remaining sources for new lead being introduced into the environment.

Scientific integrity is currently under threat at the federal level; it is more important than ever that states enact policies grounded in science for public health and safety. Maryland should protect its residents and public lands from a known toxic substance. For these reasons, this Committee should vote in support of Senate Bill 181.

Thank you.