

MD HB 1067 – Hunting--Phase-Out of Lead Ammunition

February 27, 2026

Delegate Marc Korman, Chairman

House Environment & Transportation Committee
250 Taylor Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 1067-Hunting-Phase-Out of Lead Ammunition – FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Korman and Vice Chairman Guyton:

I am Michael Soukup, a retired federal scientist, with numerous lifetime achievement awards for interpreting and applying science to large scale environmental issues. In my career I worked as an ecological research scientist, as Regional Chief Scientist for northeastern national park units, Research Director at Everglades National Park, and Chief Scientist for the National Park Service in Washington. Upon retirement I served as President and CEO at the Schoodic Institute in mid-coast Maine. I am writing to support HB 1067.

I am also writing as someone who grew up hunting along Chesapeake shores. That experience shaped my lifelong love of wildlife, and the idea that while we enjoy our wondrous natural heritage today, we must pass it along unimpaired to our children and to each generation in perpetuity.

As Chief Scientist for national parks, I learned an important fact: prevention of environmental problems whenever possible is vastly easier (and cheaper) than repair and restoration. HB 1067 works significantly in that direction.

I believe the facts are clear. When introduced to wildlife habitat, lead persists and accumulates in our wildlife. For example, more than 130 wildlife species in national parks suffer from lead exposure. Restoration of condors in national parks was a noble, necessary, but expensive proposition, yet those few still living today still have blood levels indicating lead exposure. Half of our Bald (and Golden) eagles, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, are suffering from acute or chronic lead poisoning. Since we know that responsible wildlife management requires protecting predators and scavengers, as well as prey populations, lead from firearms should no longer find its way into coastal and upland habitats and food chains. Prevention now will be for the immense good of today's and tomorrow's Marylanders, and all those who treasure the outdoors and healthy wildlife—but especially hunters, hikers, and birders.

There is also ample evidence to support moving forward given the availability of high-performance alternatives to lead in ammunition. Phasing out lead-based ammunition is thus a compromise that is far less difficult to accommodate and afford than most investments in necessary environmental safeguards (like lead in toys, house paint, and gasoline), and most all restoration efforts. And it is a solid investment in long-term public health, especially for responsible hunters who eat what they kill.

I believe that the State of Maryland is poised to take decisive, leadership action by passing HB 1067 to phase-out of lead ammunition for hunting on Maryland state lands. I hope you will do it. It is the right

thing to do, and something each Maryland legislator will look back on and be proud of. As will future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

Michael Soukup, Ph.D.

National Park Service, Retired