

HOUSE BILL 1067

M2

6lr2452

By: ~~Delegates Guyton and Allen~~, **Allen, and Healey**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2026

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 9, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Hunting – Lead and Lead-Based Ammunition – Phase-Out**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Natural Resources to require, through a
4 certain phasing-out process, the use of nonlead ammunition for the hunting of all
5 game species on or before a certain date under certain circumstances; establishing a
6 certain penalty for a first violation of this Act, subject to a certain termination date;
7 and generally relating to phasing out the use of lead or lead-based ammunition for
8 hunting.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
10 Article – Natural Resources
11 Section 10–408
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

14 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
15 Article – Natural Resources
16 Section 10–408(e)
17 Annotated Code of Maryland
18 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)
19 (As enacted by Section 1 of this Act)

20 Preamble

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 WHEREAS, The 1991 federal ban on the use of lead ammunition in waterfowl
2 hunting is considered one of the greatest conservation and animal welfare achievements in
3 wildlife management in the last century; and

4 WHEREAS, The federal ban on the use of lead ammunition in waterfowl hunting
5 saves over 1.4 million ducks annually from lead poisoning, enabling larger fall flights of
6 ducks and geese, and increasing opportunities for hunters; and

7 WHEREAS, England, Scotland, and Wales will phase out the use of lead ammunition
8 by 2029 in recognition of the serious cumulative health and environmental impacts on
9 humans and animals; and

10 WHEREAS, Over 500 peer-reviewed studies recognize that there is no safe level of
11 lead exposure for humans; and

12 WHEREAS, Peer-reviewed studies have proven that there is a direct connection
13 between the use of lead ammunition and an increase in health, neurological, emotional,
14 and intellectual deficiencies in humans; and

15 WHEREAS, It has been shown that the shattering of lead ammunition upon striking
16 bone in an animal can spread into dozens of lead fragments that are not readily visible by
17 the naked eye, but are detectable using X-ray technology; and

18 WHEREAS, Over 50,000 deer are killed by firearms in the State annually, and the
19 meat is consumed by hunters and family members; and

20 WHEREAS, Venison is donated in substantial amounts to food banks, and those
21 receiving the donated meat may be unknowingly ingesting lead; and

22 WHEREAS, Wildlife, such as the bald eagle, are being poisoned by ingesting lead
23 particles that are left in abandoned pieces of animal carcasses; now, therefore,

24 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
25 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

26 **Article – Natural Resources**

27 10–408.

28 (a) **(1)** In this section[, “handgun”] **THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE**
29 **MEANINGS INDICATED.**

30 **(2)** **“HANDGUN”** means a firearm:

31 **[(1)] (I)** With a barrel length not exceeding 6 inches; and

1 **[(2)] (II)** That does not have a scope or an electronic device attached.

2 **(3) “NONLEAD AMMUNITION” INCLUDES:**

3 **(I) AMMUNITION IN WHICH THERE IS LESS THAN 1% LEAD**
4 **CONTENT; AND**

5 **(II) ANY FEDERALLY APPROVED NONTOXIC AMMUNITION.**

6 (b) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the Department
7 shall:

8 (i) Prescribe by regulation the means or weapons for hunting
9 designated wildlife; and

10 (ii) Set forth any restrictions relating to weapons used to hunt
11 designated wildlife, including the amount [and], size, **AND TYPE** of ammunition for
12 designated game birds or mammals.

13 (2) The Department may not prohibit a licensed bow hunter from openly
14 carrying a handgun that the hunter is otherwise authorized to carry under § 4–203 of the
15 Criminal Law Article if the bow hunter:

16 (i) Is at least 21 years old;

17 (ii) Is hunting in deer management Region A as defined by the
18 Department’s Guide to Hunting and Trapping;

19 (iii) Is carrying the handgun for personal protection; and

20 (iv) Does not use the handgun to kill wildlife wounded by a vertical
21 bow or crossbow.

22 (c) The Department shall make the regulations available for distribution with
23 each hunting license purchased.

24 (d) This section does not authorize the Department to restrict the use of firearms
25 except in the activity of hunting designated wildlife.

26 **(E) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION,**
27 **ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, ~~2029~~ 2030, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REQUIRE THE USE OF**
28 **NONLEAD AMMUNITION FOR THE HUNTING OF ALL GAME SPECIES.**

29 **(2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL AUTHORIZE THE USE OF LEAD**
30 **AMMUNITION FOR MUZZLELOADERS, HANDGUNS, RIFLES, AND SHOTGUNS IF**

1 NONLEAD AMMUNITION IS NOT COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE FOR THE SPECIFIC
2 FIREARM.

3 (3) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES REGULATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT
4 REQUIRING THE USE OF NONLEAD AMMUNITION FOR HUNTING FOR A FIRST
5 OFFENSE IS SUBJECT TO A CIVIL FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$750.

6 (4) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT
7 THIS SUBSECTION.

8 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read
9 as follows:

10 Article – Natural Resources

11 10–408.

12 (e) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, on or before July
13 1, 2030, the Department shall require the use of nonlead ammunition for the hunting of all
14 game species.

15 (2) The Department shall authorize the use of lead ammunition for
16 muzzleloaders, handguns, rifles, and shotguns if nonlead ammunition is not commercially
17 available for the specific firearm.

18 (3) [A person who violates regulations of the Department requiring the use
19 of nonlead ammunition for hunting for a first offense is subject to a civil fine not exceeding
20 \$750.

21 (4) The Department shall adopt regulations to carry out this subsection.

22 ~~SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:~~

23 ~~(a) On or before July 1, 2027, the Department of Natural Resources shall adopt~~
24 ~~regulations requiring the use of nonlead ammunition for hunting pen-raised birds on~~
25 ~~regulated shooting areas.~~

26 ~~(b) On or before July 1, 2028, the Department of Natural Resources shall adopt~~
27 ~~regulations requiring the use of nonlead ammunition for hunting:~~

28 ~~(1) upland game birds;~~

29 ~~(2) webless migratory game birds; and~~

30 ~~(3) wild turkey.~~

1 ~~(e) On or before July 1, 2029, the Department of Natural Resources shall adopt~~
2 ~~regulations requiring nonlead ammunition for:~~

3 ~~(1) muzzleloaders, handguns, rifles, and shotguns used for hunting deer;~~
4 ~~and~~

5 ~~(2) hunting any other game species not specified in this section.~~

6 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Section 2 of this Act shall take
7 effect January 1, 2031.

8 ~~SECTION 3.~~ SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, except as provided in
9 Section 3 of this Act, this Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.