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Testimony of Rep. Bill Bridgeo introducing
LD 1364, Resolve, Authorizing a Study on the Impacts and Risks of Lead-based Ammunition

Before the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

Good afternoon, Sen. Baldacci, Rep. Roberts and esteemed colleagues of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. My name is Bill Bridgeo, and I represent District 60 – the East Side of Augusta. I am here today to introduce **LD 1364, Resolve, Authorizing a Study on the Impacts and Risks of Lead-based Ammunition**.

The purpose of this resolve is to have the respected staff of our own IF&W Department conduct a thoughtful analysis of the continued use of lead-based ammunition. It seeks to identify the risks to humans and wildlife when such ammunition is used in the field and has the potential to be ingested by people consuming wild game and/or other animals ingesting lead after a kill has been made.

Although I've hunted and fished for most of my life, I am by no means an expert in this area. What I have read in the limited research I've done, however, suggests that there is ample evidence to support a thorough, unbiased policy study on the topic.

Friends who are avid deer hunters raised concerns to me about the price of non-lead based ammunition, its efficacy, and the fact that many hunters have accumulated a significant stockpile over time of lead rounds (my physician's assistant told me the other day that he has lead rounds that were left to him by his grandfather).

I expect that any policy study would need to address how best to phase out lead ammunition if that were the study's recommendation; whether to only restrict its use in the field; whether to institute some sort of a "buy-back" program; and related questions.

The threshold question would, of course, be what does the science say about the risks associated with the continued use of lead-based ammunition, and does it rise to the level that would justify restricting its use.

I would like to see Maine address this issue head-on and combine good science and reasonable compromise when it comes to recommended courses of action.

A proper amount of time should be provided for such a study, and thus the bill calls for a report back to this committee no later than November 4, 2026.

I'm happy to respond to questions but I suspect there are others much better suited than me here to do so.

Thank you for your time and consideration.