

Testimony Neither for Nor Against L.D. 1364-Resolve, Authorizing a Study on the Impacts and Risks of Lead-based Ammunition

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Anyone familiar with the lead-based ammunition issue in Maine knows that this bill is a farce, intended to placate proponents of phasing out lead while actually accomplishing nothing that would upset the consumptive use extremists. Several years ago, SAM executive director David Trahan publicly stated that Maine would never ban lead ammunition for hunting.

I beg to differ. I also don't expect this committee to do anything about it.

Maine needs to phase out lead-based ammunition used in hunting for two very important reasons:

- 1) No amount of lead is safe for children. Lead bullets fragment greatly and travel significant distances through an animal's body. Undoubtedly, some fragments remain. Maine's Hunters for the Hungry Program receives and distributes what is likely lead tainted meat to Maine people. Claims are made that the portions with lead fragments are cut out and discarded. Studies elsewhere have shown high incidences of lead fragments in ground game meat intended for public distribution. The only way to ensure that game meat is safe is to x-ray it. Some lead tainted scraps may also be used for coyote bait. Maine's Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife have known about this problem for years and have done nothing. How many Maine children and adults are being poisoned by the State of Maine?
- 2) Lead is extremely toxic to birds. Birds such as eagles ingest lead fragments from animals that are shot and not retrieved, from gut piles, and from bait piles. The only way to stop this is to end the use of lead bullets for hunting in Maine. This joke of a bill is nothing more than delaying the inevitable.

I urge the committee to take this issue very seriously and **do your homework** before voting on this bill. Do not rely on testimony provided by the consumptive use extremists who ignore the facts and care about only their own self-interest. I also urge the committee to amend the bill to phase out the use of lead-based ammunition for hunting within five years. There are cost-effective, safe alternatives. There is absolutely no valid reason to continue to use lead-based ammunition for hunting anywhere.