



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
From: Ashley Nye, Sierra Club Maine
Date: 28 February 2025
Re: **Testimony in Support of L.D. 1364:** Resolve, Authorizing a Study on the Impacts and Risks of Leadbased Ammunition

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries & Wildlife,

I am testifying on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members and supporters nation-wide.

The harmful effects of lead have long been known to us. Decades ago, thorough research established that long term exposure to the element results in brain damage, organ failure, and increases the risk of neurological disorders including Alzheimers, Parkinson's, and schizophrenia. As a result, the use of lead has been banned in the manufacturing of paint, gas, and most other manufacturing of daily use items. When it comes to bullets, again the effects have long been known. Research on California's endangered condors revealed the primary cause of their decline to be lead poisoning from the carrion they scavenged. Similar research conducted in the north east suggests the same predicament for bald eagles, our nation's beloved feathered icon. The consequences of lead don't stop at their detriment to carnivorous raptors. Lead contaminates the meat subsistence hunters bring home to eat or sell, directly entering human bodies through consumption. Furthermore, lead remains in the forest long after its host has decayed, becoming a deadly and invisible environmental pollutant.

I could understand our reluctance to act, if there were some legitimate reason to remain faithful to the material. However, when it comes to bullets many alternatives have arisen, most of which have proven more effective in the sport of hunting than their lead counterparts. Lead bullets, like most of the environmental issues that come to this committee, are not just a threat to wildlife or our forests. They are a threat to the health of all who utilize the same outdoor spaces, and an especially hazardous threat to the unknowing hunters and their families who consume lead-shot game. I urge you to consider

public health and quality of life in your deliberation of this bill, and vote in the interests of your constituents.

As we work to balance responsible hunting with ongoing protection of Maine's treasured natural resources, we encourage the committee to support L.D. 1364.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Nye,
Sierra Club Maine