



**National Headquarters**

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The Hon. Rep. David L. Deen, Chair  
House Committee on Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources  
Vermont State House, Rm 47  
Montpelier, VT 05641

April 21, 2015

Dear Chairman Deen and Members of the Vermont House Committee on Fish, Wildlife, and Water Resources:

On behalf of Defenders of Wildlife, a nonprofit conservation organization with over 1.2 million members, supporters, and activists nationwide, including over 5,000 members, supporters, and activists in Vermont, I write to endorse H.460 prohibiting the use of lead ammunition for hunting in Vermont.

Lead is a known neurotoxicant that has been removed from paint, gasoline, pipes, and more due to documented impacts to public health and the environment. Lead ammunition needlessly exposes people and wildlife to this life-threatening toxicant. Lead ammunition is the single largest source of lead knowingly discharged onto our lands and into our waters. Lead ammunition can poison humans and wildlife both directly and indirectly, but even minimal exposure to lead can cause extensive damage.

More than 130 species of wildlife worldwide, including endangered species, have been documented to have suffered detrimental effects from exposure to lead ammunition. A single ingested shotgun pellet or bullet fragment is sufficient to cause brain damage in birds, resulting in inhibition of critical neuromuscular, auditory, and visual responses. Lead poisoning can induce lethargy, blindness, paralysis of lungs and intestinal tract, various organ failure, seizure, and death in wild animals.

Lead also poses severe risks to human health and development, especially in children. Multiple studies have shown that meat from animals shot with lead ammunition is often contaminated with tiny fragments of lead that can be ingested when the meat is eaten. Therefore, individuals who consume meat from animals killed with lead ammunition are at high risk for lead exposure.

As a conservation organization dedicated to protecting wildlife and healthy ecosystems, Defenders of Wildlife supports H.460. In 2013, Defenders of Wildlife supported the first-ever lead ammunition ban in California, AB711, and encouraged other states to pick up the cause. When lead-free ammunition alternatives are widely available and just as effective, there is no need for the continued discharge of lead ammunition into the lands and waters of the United States. Defenders of Wildlife strongly endorses H.460 and commends your efforts to put Vermont at the forefront of this vitally important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donald J. Barry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a distinct "J" and "B".

Donald J. Barry  
Senior Vice President, Conservation Programs