

SUPPORT FOR H.F. 3657, AND IN PARTICULAR--SECTION 35. Nontoxic shot required for taking small game in certain areas.

My name is Carrol Henderson and I am commenting as a private citizen and avid lifetime hunter, wildlife biologist, and conservationist. I am commenting on my support for HF 3657.1 and in particular for Section 35 Nontoxic shot required for taking small game in certain areas.

This provision is a special opportunity for hunters to demonstrate their commitment for conservation and stewardship of our public hunting lands and for protection of wildlife from lead poisoning on those lands. Hunters have long been at the forefront of wildlife conservation, but over the past 40-plus years, the toxic effects on wildlife caused by spent lead ammunition has become increasingly well-documented. More than 500 scientific studies published since 1898 have documented 134 species of wildlife area poisoned by lead worldwide, including bald and golden eagles and other raptors in Minnesota.

The ammunition industry has been very responsive in developing nontoxic ammunition for upland game hunting since it became mandatory nationwide in 1992 for waterfowl hunting. They have overcome early problems with performance, cost, and availability to the point that nontoxic ammo is now an excellent ammo choice and is preferred by many hunters for upland game hunting and used by many for over 20 years..

However, continuing use and advocacy for toxic lead ammo by some hunters is tarnishing the long term reputation and image of hunters as conservationists and stewards of our hunting lands and hunting traditions. Instead, they become polluters who add more lead to the landscape on a cumulative annual basis. The toxic impact of spent lead ammo on wildlife is well documented. This problem is compounded on Minnesota's Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) because some of the best late season pheasant hunting is concentrated in the cattail and phragmites stands adjacent to WMA wetlands. Shots fired there can cause lead to be deposited in the WMA wetlands where it can poison waterfowl. Nontoxic shot is required by law for waterfowl hunting throughout the US on such wetlands, and it should be required on those adjacent WMA uplands to provide consistency in use of nontoxic shot.

This week we observed the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. If hunters want to demonstrate their continuing commitment as conservationists and stewards of our hunting lands, our wildlife, and our hunting legacy, they should support this provision for requiring nontoxic shot for taking small game on our Wildlife Management Areas in the farmland zone. Now that we know the tragic and unnecessary toll of lead poisoning on wildlife, it makes no more sense to continue use of lead for hunting now than it did for efforts to continue using DDT as a pesticide 50-some years ago. We should consider this proposal as a gift to future generations of hunters for healthy and productive hunting

lands, wildlife free of lead poisoning, and a positive image for hunters that will aid in recruitment of hunters in the future.

I view the inclusion of this proposal in HF 3657 as an important first step in eventually making a transition to nontoxic ammo for all hunting in Minnesota. That transition will both provide important long term benefits for hunters, game species, and many raptors and other nongame wildlife species that are being poisoned by spent lead ammo.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my interests and concerns regarding this proposed legislation. Carrol Henderson.