

WHEREAS, The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has identified Dorchester County as a lead shot problem area for endangered bald eagles; and

WHEREAS, The United States Fish and Wildlife Service under the provisions of the Stevens Amendment to the Interior Appropriations Bill, P.L. 98-473, Section 305, is prohibited from invoking a ban on the use of lead shot ammunition without first receiving a request for such a ban from a state; and

WHEREAS, The United States Fish and Wildlife Service, through the announcement in the Federal Register of January 6, 1986, has indicated that there will be no opening of the waterfowl hunting season in Dorchester County in 1986-1987 unless the State of Maryland approves the prohibition against the use of lead shot; and

WHEREAS, Section 10-604(e) of the Annotated Code of Maryland prohibits the State of Maryland from conveying to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service the aforesaid approval; and

WHEREAS, Severe economic hardship would result in Dorchester County if the 1986-1987 waterfowl hunting season were not to open; and

WHEREAS, The use of lead shot ammunition poses a potential threat to birds of prey and various parts of the State of Maryland; and

WHEREAS, It is the policy of the General Assembly that any legislation or ban on the use of lead shot ammunition should be based on a determination of the necessity to protect the State's wildfowl population from contamination resulting from the use of said shot; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article - Natural Resources

10-604.

-(e) Any law to the contrary notwithstanding, neither the Secretary of Natural Resources nor any other official of the Department of Natural Resources may promulgate any rule or regulation banning or limiting the use or possession of lead shot ammunition while hunting wild waterfowl. Any rule or regulation which bans or limits the use or possession of lead shot ammunition while hunting wild waterfowl is declared null, void, and of no effect. Neither the State nor any agency or department may request that the federal government enforce any federal rule or regulation regarding a ban or limit on the use or possession of lead shot ammunition, EXCEPT FOR NONTOXIC SHOT ZONES AS