

American Sportfishing Association

News Release



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For Immediate Release Mary Jane Williamson, Communications Director,
mjwilliamson@asafishing.org, 703-519-9691, x227,
www.asafishing.org

Sportfishing Industry Applauds EPA's Decision to Reject Lead Ban Petition *America's anglers triumph over unwarranted petition to ban lead in fishing tackle*

Alexandria, VA – November 4, 2010 – The sportfishing community commends the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson for its decision to reject a sweeping petition to ban lead in all fishing tackle. The petition, which was submitted on August 3, 2010, by the Center for Biological Diversity and four other groups, requested that EPA ban all lead in all fishing tackle on all U.S. waters. The petition also included a request to ban the use of lead ammunition in the hunting and shooting sports. That part was denied on August 27 because EPA does not have the legal authority to regulate ammunition under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). Opposition from anglers was strong; over 43,000 anglers sent comments requesting dismissal of the petition to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson through www.KeepAmericaFishing.orgTM.

In dismissing the petition, EPA indicated that the "petitioners have not demonstrated that the requested rule is necessary to protect against an unreasonable risk of injury to health or the environment, as required by the TSCA." EPA also cited state-specific actions and the increasing education and outreach activities being undertaken, stating that those actions "...call into question whether a national ban on lead in fishing gear would be the least burdensome, adequately protective approach to address the concern, as called for under TSCA."

"The sportfishing community applauds EPA's decision," said American Sportfishing Association (ASA) Vice President Gordon Robertson. "It represents a solid review of the biological facts, as well as the economic and social impacts that would have resulted from such a sweeping federal action. It is a common sense decision."

Robertson further said, "Increases in the cost of recreational fishing would stop many anglers from enjoying the sport. The resultant decrease in fishing license sales and the federal manufacturers' excise tax on fishing tackle, which represent the two most important funding sources for fisheries conservation, would be a large setback for fish and wildlife managers and this country's natural resources."

"The sportfishing industry is very proud of the fact that America's anglers were united on this important issue and played a pivotal role in EPA's decision to reject this unwarranted petition," noted Robertson. "KeepAmericaFishingTM provides anglers an opportunity to present a strong, coherent voice so that they can express their concerns to decision makers. EPA's dismissal is without a doubt in direct response to the facts we presented which were soundly supported by our collective comments and input."

The sportfishing community's objection to the ban was based on:

- The data does not support a federal ban on lead sinkers used for fishing. In general, bird populations, including loons and other waterfowl species, are subject to many more substantial threats such as habitat loss through shoreline development. Any lead restrictions on fishing tackle need to be based on sound science that supports the appropriate action for a particular water body or species.
- A federal ban of the use of lead in fishing tackle will have a significant negative impact on recreational anglers and fisheries resources, but a negligible impact on waterfowl populations.
- Depending on the alternative metal and current prevailing raw material costs, non-lead fishing tackle products can cost from ten to twenty times more than lead products. Non-lead products may not be as available and most do not perform as well. Mandatory transitioning to non-lead fishing tackle would require significant and costly changes from both the industry and anglers.
- America's 60 million anglers generate over \$45 billion in retail sales with a \$125 billion impact on the nation's economy, creating employment for over one million people.

This is not the first time that such a ban has been requested. In 1992 EPA received a similar petition to ban lead fishing tackle and in 1995 the Agency abandoned the proposed rule because there was no threat to bird populations and the economic impact was determined to be significant. In September 2010, legislation was introduced to both chambers of Congress to prevent an overarching federal ban on lead in recreational fishing tackle ([S. 3850](#) and [H.R. 6284](#)).

"Even with this decision, ASA will continue to work with legislators and EPA to ensure that future considerations of lead fishing tackle bans are made in response to sound science, not unwarranted petitions," concluded Robertson. "Aside from the many anglers that spoke up, many organizations and members of Congress deserve thanks for decisively voicing their opinion to EPA."

To learn more about this issue and to support the voice of the American angler, please visit www.KeepAmericaFishing.org.

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[The American Sportfishing Association](#) (ASA) is the sportfishing industry's trade association, committed to looking out for the interests of the entire sportfishing community. We give the industry a unified voice speaking out when emerging laws and policies could significantly affect sportfishing business or sportfishing itself. We invest in long-term ventures to ensure the industry will remain strong and prosperous as well as safeguard and promote the enduring economic and conservation values of sportfishing in America. ASA also represents the interests of America's 60 million anglers who generate over \$45 billion in retail sales with a \$125 billion impact on the nation's economy creating employment for over one million people.