



## State Assembly proposes ban on lead fishing weights and sinkers

Parimal M. Rohit, February 22, 2018

SACRAMENTO — Lead fishing weights and sinkers are the target of a new bill proposed by Assembly member Bill Quirk, D-Hayward.

Quirk's proposal – Assembly Bill 2787 – would ban the manufacture, sale or purchase of fishing weights or sinkers across the state.

Weights or sinkers would be banned if it contains more than 0.1 percent lead by weight, is less than 50 grams in mass and does not have a cross section greater than or equal to 2 centimeters in length.

AB 2787 would effectively create a new crime for the manufacture, purchase or sale of banned fishing weights or sinkers.

The California Sportfishing League (CSL), in a released statement, called AB 2787 the country's "most far-reaching ban fishing tackle."

CSL officials, in response to AB 2787, launched a "No Fishing Tackle Ban" petition, as part of an effort to mobilize the state's estimated 2.6 million anglers against the bill. The petition can be found at [www.savefishing.com/StopTheFishingTackleBan](http://www.savefishing.com/StopTheFishingTackleBan).

Quirk, in his official statement, said the lead ban is necessary to protect wildlife and push for non-lead alternative products.

"In California, we know these weights have killed brown pelicans, herons, loons, gulls, and even harbor seals. Around the world, these weights have caused death in swans, geese, bald eagles and turtles," Quirk said in his released statement.

California's recreational fishing lobby, however, questioned whether Quirk's bill was backed by any scientific findings.

Language of the bill also raises some questions. Is the proposal based on any sort of California-based study, demonstrating threats to wildlife? The proposal itself does not require a study to be performed.

What was the basis of specifically prohibiting the selected size of lead tackle to ban? Where is the threatened wildlife located?

This is certainly not the first time policymakers have tried to ban lead fishing weights or sinkers.

The lack of a required study or associated costs with Quirk's proposal means AB 2787 could go to a full legislative vote without having to pass through an Appropriations Committee vote first.

Similar legislative attempts occurred in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont and Washington – though it's unclear whether the bans in those states mimic the proposed prohibition in California. Are the lead weights banned in these states smaller or larger than the tackle proposed by Quirk's ban?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in the final days of Pres. Barack Obama's second term in the White House, pushed to implement a lead fishing weights ban on federal lands through 2022; the policy direction, however, was reversed under Pres. Donald J. Trump's administration.

California's Department of Toxic Substances Control had looked into regulating lead fishing tackle as part of its Safer Consumer Products program. The initiative sought to reduce the amount of toxic chemicals found in retail items, including fishing tackle.

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