



Interior Secretary reverses lead fishing tackle ban

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — A federal ban on lead fishing tackle, imposed by Pres. Barack Obama just before he left office in January, was reversed on Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's first day in office, it was announced March 2.

Zinke, who was confirmed as Interior Secretary on March 1, also issued an order promoting conservation, habitat management and access to outdoor recreational opportunities. Both orders, according to a statement issued by the department, would expand access to public lands for fishing and other recreational activities.

"Outdoor recreation is about both our heritage and our economy. Between hunting, fishing, motorized recreation, camping and more, the industry generates thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity," Zinke said in a statement. "This package of secretarial orders will expand access for outdoor enthusiasts and also make sure the community's voice is heard."

Secretarial Order No. 3346 overturns Obama's ban on lead fishing tackle used on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands and waters. Zinke's office stated the ban was reversed to highlight "the need for additional review and consultation with local stakeholders."

Conservation stewardship, game and habitat management and access to outdoor recreation opportunities were themes of Secretarial Order No. 3347.

Federal bureaus and agencies would, according to the department, be directed to "immediately identify areas where recreation and fishing can be expanded."

"The order also requests input from the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council and Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council to provide recommendations on enhancing and expanding access on public lands and improving habitat for fish and wildlife," Department of the Interior staff stated.

Members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, American Recreation Council, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, Mule Deer Foundation, American Sportfishing Association and National Marine Manufacturers Association, among others, joined Zinke in his announcement of both orders.

California Sportfishing League Executive Director Marko Mlikotin issued a statement favoring the lead fishing tackle ban reversal, saying California's anglers welcomed the decision.

"At a time when fishing participation rates in California are declining at an unacceptable rate, California anglers welcome the Trump Administration's order to repeal a ban on lead ammunition and fishing tackle," Mlikotin said, adding the timing of Obama's ban did not allow for public review of his decision.

Zinke, most recently a House of Representatives member from Montana, was nominated by then President-Elect Donald J. Trump to head the Department of Interior in December 2016.

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