



## Sacramento considering ban on lead fishing tackle

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SACRAMENTO — California's anglers are preparing for a showdown with state legislators as Assembly member Bill Quirk's, D-Hayward, proposal to ban lead fishing tackle will earn its first crack at a legislative review.

Quirk's Assembly Bill 2787 (AB 2787) will be heard in committee on April 10, the first stop for a controversial bill seeking to stop the manufacture, purchase or sale of specified fishing weights or sinkers.

Current law regulates the disposal of certain batteries, lead wheel weights and household hazardous waste. Violating the state's hazardous waste control laws is a crime. AB 2787, if signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown, would make the use of lead fishing weights of 50 grams or lighter and a cross section of less than 2 centimeters in any direction a crime.

"This bill would, as part of the hazardous waste control laws, prohibit a person from manufacturing, selling, or purchasing a fishing weight or sinker in California that has no cross section greater than or equal to two centimeters in length, is under 50 grams in mass, and contains more than 0.1 percent lead by weight," language in AB 2787 stated. "The bill would provide ... that the alternative remains subject to the evaluation process specified in that law. Because the bill would create a new crime, it would impose a state-mandated local program."

AB 2787 would model California's lead fishing weight ban after similar policies in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. Quirk added similar bans are also in effect in Canada and the United Kingdom.

"Small lead fishing weights, like splitshot, are killing California wildlife," Quirk said in a released statement. "Many birds consume river gravel to aid in mashing and digesting

food. Often they accidentally ingest discarded lead fishing weights. The lead poisons their liver, leading to a slow death. Water fowl, in particular, are common victims.”

Angler groups, however, stated California’s fishing community has little to nothing in common with their counterparts in New England and the Northeast.

California Sportfishing League launched a campaign shortly after AB 2787 was introduced, urging anglers to petition members of the Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee, which will review the proposal, April 10.

One of California Sportfishing League’s talking points directly challenges Quirk’s legislative intent.

“While lead bans exist in some Northeastern states or other countries, wildlife [they] are not commonly found in California,” the petition’s talking point stated. “There is no evidence that lead fishing weights threaten California wildlife populations. Isolated incidences in California do not suggest a significant risk, or the justification for a statewide ban.”

Banning lead fishing weights would also increase angling costs and harm tax revenue, California Sportfishing League added.

Quirk chairs the Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee.

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