



PRESS RELEASE

California Moving to Ban Fishing Tackle

DTSC Runs Roughshod Over Anglers, Despite No Scientific Basis

April 16, 2015 (Sacramento, CA): Today, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) [announced](#) that common fishing tackle would remain on a list of consumer products marked to undergo a costly and onerous regulatory process, a reckless move that could lead to a ban on most of today's fishing tackle and will likely accelerate the decline in fishing participation, threaten jobs and reduce state revenue.

DTSC admitted in public hearings that it has no scientific studies demonstrating that lead poses an environmental problem in California. Yet, as evidenced its decision today, DTSC has declared fishing gear to be one of the top seven most significant threats to health faced by Californians and its environment.

"State regulators failed to comply with state law that requires them to conduct an independent analysis before including any product in this regulatory process. The inclusion of fishing tackle will likely harm recreational fishing and the jobs that depend on it," said David Dickerson, President of the California Sportfishing League. "It appears that politics, rather than science, was the basis for DTSC's decision. While there are many sources of pollution that pose a serious threat to California's ocean and streams, anglers are not among them."

In 2010, the U.S. EPA ruled that lead weights do not pose an unreasonable risk to wildlife and this past December, President Barack Obama signed a budget bill that prohibits the use of federal dollars to ban lead fishing weights.

As revealed in a [study](#) recently released by CSL, high costs and unwarranted limitations on fishing have contributed to a major decline in California's fishing participation rate. While California has one the Nation's longest coastlines, over 4,000 lakes and reservoirs, 20,000 registered ponds and thousands of miles of streams, the [State ranks dead last](#) in the United States for fishing participation. Since 1980, annual [fishing license sales](#) have declined by over 55%, while California's population has increased by nearly 60% to over 37 million people. If this trend continues, the number of fishing licenses is expected to drop below 500,000 or another 47%.

"The high cost of fishing licenses and unwarranted limits on fishing have contributed to a significant decline in participation," said Dickerson. "Increasing the cost of gear and potential bans will only accelerate the decline, and threaten California jobs that are dependent on outdoor recreation and tourism."

Experts believe regulations that could follow the DTSC's assessment will be extremely costly and may encourage manufactures to flee the California market.

“The proposed regulations will increase the likelihood that manufacturers, sellers and retailers of fishing weights and gear will be subjected to costly and onerous regulations, and potential fines,” wrote [Maureen Gorsen](#), an environmental attorney at Alston & Bird LLP and former director of DTSC, in a [legal memo](#). “The result could be a wide range of enforcement options requiring restrictions or bans on sale, product reformulation, additional environmental impact studies, development of disposal programs or funding for fundamental research and development. The bottom line is that the cost of manufacturing fishing gear will increase significantly and these costs will be passed on to consumers.”

BACKGROUND

Anglers can express their objections to new fishing tackle regulations or a potential ban by signing an online petition found on CSL's website and Facebook page. To date, over 1,900 California anglers have signed the petition.

The [Green Chemistry Initiative](#), under which the DTSC is authorized to regulate potentially dangerous toxins, was established by the State Legislature and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2008 to depoliticize the process by which individual products and chemicals were regulated. The law requires DTSC to conduct independent, California-specific analysis prior to listing a product for potential regulation. During its September 29, 2014 workshop in Cypress, DTSC officials repeatedly stated that it had not, and would not, conduct required scientific analysis.

Requiring non-lead fishing tackle could require significant and costly changes for the fishing industry. Depending on the alternative metal and current prevailing raw material costs, the cost of fishing gear could increase 10- to 20-fold.

When the Department's draft Priority Product Work Plan was first released in September, CSL led efforts to have fishing gear removed from the document. The California Chamber of Commerce, the California Travel Association, the National Federation of Independent Business, the California Parks Hospitality Association, the California Association for Recreational Fishing, the American Sportfishing Association, Coastside Fishing Club and hundreds of individual anglers all submitted letters in favor of delisting fishing gear.

Additional background information can be found on [CSL's website](#).

Recreational fishing contributes over \$4.9 billion annually to California's economy, a major source of outdoor recreation, tourism and jobs.

The California Sportfishing League is a nonprofit coalition of fresh and saltwater anglers, and small business owners devoted to protecting access to recreational fishing, and the leading opponent of additional fishing tackle regulations. To learn more about the threats to recreational fishing visit the [“Government Watch” page](#) at www.SportfishingConservation.org.

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