



# State legislature backs off lead fishing weight ban

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SACRAMENTO — Assembly member Bill Quirk’s proposal to ban lead fishing weights and sinkers cleared its first committee hearing, but the legislation was amended before members voted in favor of the proposition.

Assembly Bill 2787 (AB 2787), as amended, will move forward as a study on the potential effects of lead on California wildlife. The bill no longer proposes an outright ban on lead fishing tackle, which would be viewed as a legislative victory among California’s anglers.

Quirk’s bill initially proposed an outright ban on lead fishing weights and sinkers of 50 grams or lighter. A large contingency of angling groups and recreational fishers across the state immediately opposed the proposal, stating AB 2787 lacked scientific studies to support an all-out ban on lead fishing weights. The amended bill still posed some concerns to California’s angling lobby.

“While we appreciate the author’s willingness to amend the bill and work with the angling community, the bill has not earned our support – not yet,” Marko Mlikotin, Executive Director of the California Sportfishing League (CSL), said in a released statement. “The study, as defined by the author, is overly broad and could be contracted out to an anti-fishing organization, instead of an objective government agency.”

AB 2787, as amended, would direct a non-government agency to study the effects of lead on California wildlife. A statement issued by CSL shortly after the Assembly committee vote stated it hoped the study would be conducted by an objective government agency.

Mlikotin added CSL coordinated a petition to stop the lead fishing ban proposal and gathered more than 5,500 signatures. He added the amended bill, despite lingering questions about the proposed study, is a victory for California’s anglers.

“Anglers can claim a big victory here, but there is no question that we need to continue to communicate to legislators the importance of protecting recreational fishing’s future,” Mlikotin stated. “Proponents of banning lead fishing tackle will not give up, even if there is no science to justify it.” Additional reporting will be available in the May 4 issue of *The Log*.

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