

Oceanside Senior Anglers, Inc.

PO Box 2502
Oceanside, California 92051

To: Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee
Assembly Member Bill Quirk, Chair and Members of the Committee
1020 N Street, Room 171
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB-2787 Lead fishing weights and sinkers. (2017-2018)

Oceanside Senior Anglers, Inc. (OSA) was formed in 1995 and incorporated as a non-profit 501 (c) 7 organization on August 8, 2011. The club provides a sportfishing outlet to Southern California seniors. Our club has over 270 members who contribute to the local & state economy by purchasing California fishing licenses, fishing tackle and services directly related to fishing. Our club spends over \$100,000 annually on saltwater fishing charters, both inshore and offshore.

We are writing the Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee to voice our opposition to AB 2787. Our club is not so naïve to believe that lead does not pose a potential health risk to the environment, but AB 2787 as written is an overreach of state control on a form of lead (fishing weights) that has not had sufficient independent study to support the claim that fishing weights pose a human health risk and the weights should be regulated by the California Health and Safety Code.

AB 2787 states: *"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% lead by weight".* (For the readers reference, 50 grams = 1.76 ounce, 2 cm = 0.78 inch)

While this size and weight restriction outlined in AB 2787 may work for fresh water application, the size & weight limits will not work for saltwater applications. Typical lead weights used in salt water fishing range from 0.5 ounce to over 3 pounds. The high cost of using an alternative material for weights in salt water applications would force many fishermen to leave the sport. According to the California Sportfishing League, California has seen a 55% reduction in license sales since 1985, yet the cost of a fishing license is 66% higher than the national average of other coastal states. Add in the additional cost to purchase expensive alternate material fishing weights with the size descriptions outlined in the bill and the number of fisherman will drop even further. It's a simple equation that I know the committee understands. Fewer fishermen, means fewer dollars to protect, enforce and logically conserve California's ocean environments.

Our club members recognize that fresh water shore birds could ingest small split shot size lead fishing weights. Ingestion of lead by aquatic birds has been well documented, thus the change from lead to steel in shot gun ammunition. In an effort to reduce the chances of ingestion around lakes and streams, many of our anglers have already moved to alternative weights for fresh water applications.

Where is the science behind the claim that lead fishing weights typically used in saltwater fishing pose a health risk to sea birds, much less humans. Many studies have been conducted that show lead is reactive, but on the low end of the reactive spectrum. Further studies and common sense suggest that

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lead weights are buried over time in the stream, lake or ocean sediment, eliminating direct ingestion by aquatic bird life. The chances of a seabird consuming a large fishing weight are minimal at best. Consider the fact that when fishing for deep water rock fish up to 3 pounds of weight may be required to reach depths of 50 to 60 fathoms. Risk of ingestion by a seabird from a lost fishing weight at 60 fathoms makes no sense.

Financially, how does AB 2787 propose to fund the ancillary state departments that will be required to monitor and enforce the bill if passed into law? California Fish & Wildlife is already taxed on manpower enforcing existing laws and regulations. What state organization(s) will be burdened with enforcing the proposed law? How will they be funded?

With all due respect for the Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee, our club feels further consideration and scientific study is needed to prove fishing weights used in saltwater applications cause undue harm to the environment? It makes no sense at this time to eliminate or restrict the use of lead products destined for saltwater applications. The ES & TM committee should lead by example, no pun intended. Show the sporting community that there are other methods or products that can be substituted for lead and the sporting community would eagerly adopt a creative solution because it's good for the sport and environment.

Your committee would be better suited structuring legislation that would restrict and ultimately eliminate the use of plastic products that pollute our coasts and kill untold numbers of seabirds and aquatic animals every year or back the effort to stop the continued raw sewage pollution of the ocean by the Tijuana river system on the US/Mexico border. The Tijuana river sewage flow is a human and environmental health disaster today. Where is the action of the State Assembly in addressing this ongoing costly health issue?

In conclusion, Oceanside Senior Anglers and members and the greater fishing community oppose AB 2787.

Respectfully;

Thomas "Bo" Bolender
Conservation Director
Oceanside Senior Anglers, Inc.

Oceanside Senior Anglers is a 501 (c) 7 organization that supports the California Fish & Game Commission, California Fish & Wildlife, Pacific Fishery Management Council, NOAA Fisheries and the Coastal Conservation Council California. Our club actively practices and teaches sustainable fishing practices and many other environmental conservation efforts.

<https://www.osanglers.org>