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March 26, 2018

Honorable Bill Quirk
Assemblyman, 20th AD
State Capitol, Room 2163
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblyman Quirk,

The Coastal Conservation Association of California (CCA CAL) and Coastside Fishing Club oppose Assembly Bill 2787, which proposes to ban the manufacture, sale, and purchase of nearly all fishing weights and sinkers in California. AB 2787 would unnecessarily ban affordable fishing tackle that is used safely by millions of anglers throughout the state in fresh and saltwater sportfishing.

CCA CAL is a statewide, non-profit marine conservation organization working to protect the state's marine resources and interests of coastal recreational anglers. CCA CAL's objective is to conserve, promote, and enhance the present and future availability of the coastal resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public. CCA has proven time and again that anglers are the best stewards of the marine environment. We work to protect not only the health, habitat and sustainability of our marine resources, but also the interests of recreational anglers and their access to the resources they cherish.

The Coastside Fishing Club is an all-volunteer, 11,000-member recreational fishing organization in Central and Northern California founded in 2002. Coastside actively engages at the local, state and national levels to represent the interests of recreational anglers. Coastside advocates for the protection and enhancement of marine resources and for the public's right to sustainably access those resources.

The use and handling of recreational fishing products made from lead does not present any significant or unreasonable health hazard to users. No objective, peer-reviewed study justifies AB 2787 on human health grounds. In fact, the marginal increase in lead exposure from sportfishing is tiny and inconsequential. Many generations of Californians have used lead fishing weights with zero signs of negative health effects due to exposure. Moreover, there is no evidence in California that the use of lead fishing weights presents a genuine harm to aquatic, avian or terrestrial wildlife populations. Studies on New England wildlife populations not found in California are not a substitute for evidence needed here. Nor has there been any proof of adverse impact to water quality.

Advocates for banning lead in recreational fishing equipment often claim that there are many widely available and suitable substitutes for lead in recreational fishing tackle. In truth, each substitute has limited applications in sportfishing and either do not provide equivalent performance to lead and/or significantly increase the price of recreational fishing equipment. Present and foreseen technology only provides three reasonable alternatives: steel (both carbon and stainless), tin, and tungsten. Each has limitations in performance and/or price as compared to lead. All other substitutes are impractical or have very limited application and have or will not stand the test of the market place.

According to a 2015 study, developed by the California Sportfishing League, fishing license sales have decreased by over 55% since 1980. The high cost of fishing licenses in California is identified as a leading barrier to participation in the sport. In fact, California is one of the most expensive states in the nation to purchase a fishing license. Further, the decline in hunting and fishing licenses has been identified as one of the primary drivers in the systemic budget deficit that is plaguing the Department of Fish and Wildlife. AB 2787, as drafted, will further drive up the cost of fishing and limit access, thereby further driving Californians away from sportfishing and license purchases. This will only compound the structural budget deficit of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The decline in participation would also have lasting implications for communities that are dependent on outdoor tourism and recreation for tax revenue and jobs.

AB 2787 would also undermine the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's new R3 program (Retention, Recruitment and Reactivation) that aims to increase fishing participation efforts that are critical to funding state conservation and hatchery programs. R3 is part of a national effort to increase the number of hunters and anglers who participate in these traditional outdoor recreation pursuits.

The millions of Californians engaging in sportfishing will see the cost of participation increase under AB 2787. Recreational fishing represents good, clean, family-oriented recreation. Recreational fishing nationally enjoys a 93 percent approval rating and promotes essential social and cultural connections across all segments of California's population. Fishing also has many participants who are over 65, retired and on limited income.

A lead fishing tackle ban is not justified and simply will create a regulatory and enforcement burden while making angling more expensive. harming anglers, manufacturers, retailers, and communities dependent on outdoor tourism. Therefore, CCA CAL and Coastside Fishing Club oppose AB 2787.

Sincerely,



Wayne Kotow
Executive Director
Coastal Conservation Association of California



Jeff Richards
President
Coastside Fishing Club

Cc: Members, Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials
Committee consultant, Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials
Republican consultant, Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials
Senators John Moorlach, Catherine Galgiani, Co-chairs California Outdoor Sporting Caucus
Assemblymembers Brian Dahle, Jim Frazier, Co-chairs California Outdoor Sporting Caucus
Chuck Bonham, Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Senator Mike McGuire, Chair, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture
Tom Weseloh, Consultant, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture
Erik Sklar, President, Fish and Game Commission
Valerie Termini, Executive Director, Fish and Game Commission