



PRESS RELEASE

Recreational Fishing Alliance

5724 N. Route 9, New Gretna, NJ 08224

P: 888-564-6732 F: 609-294-3812

For Immediate Release
Contact: Jim Hutchinson, Jr.

September 8, 2010
888 564-6732

ANGLERS SAY EPA LEAD BAN PETITION IS SIMPLY FOR THE BIRDS September 15 Deadline For Fishermen To Weigh In On Heavy Metal Debate

Capt. Bob Zales, II, president of the National Association of Charterboat Operators (NACO) recently emailed a letter to charter captains encouraging comment on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) petition to ban all lead in fishing tackle. According to Zales, the EPA was recently petitioned by the Center for Biological Diversity and four other organizations to ban all lead in fishing tackle under the Toxic Substances Control Act.

Zales, who was just voted to a three-year term on the national board of directors for the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) urged fishermen to weigh in on the potential ban on lead fishing products, which he said included lead sinkers, jigs, weighted fly line, ballast in lures, spinners, other terminal tackle and even components in reels. "This sweeping proposal would include all tackle that contains lead, so please send your comments," Zales said.

RFA Executive Director Jim Donofrio said there are legitimate concerns raised by the issue of lost lead-based terminal gear used by anglers, but stressed that other more reasonable approaches to minimize the introduction of lead into the marine environment should be investigated. "Calling for a sudden and complete ban on lead fishing products seems to run well beyond the intent of the original petition," Donofrio said, adding "the original petition was presented with the aim of reducing bird deaths caused by the ingestion of lead sinkers and jigheads, yet the best available science shows that less than 1% of all waterfowl and other are killed by lead sinker ingestion." A longtime waterfowler himself, Donofrio said "Banning lead in recreational fishing tackle will have a negligible impact on waterfowl populations."

Instead of a sudden and complete ban, Donofrio hopes that national manufacturers and their associated trade groups would help defeat the proposal by offering to adopt a responsible stewardship role by committing to a gradual reduction of lead in terminal gear through the use of alternative non-toxic materials. "Individual anglers and small business operators should not be denied access to fishing opportunities if lead-free alternatives aren't readily available," Donofrio said. The RFA believes that a lead ban would be unfair to the general angling public considering the lack of available alternatives and questionable science.

"At this point, the data does not support a federal ban on lead sinkers for fishing, and we support the efforts of groups like NACO and the Marine Retailers Association of America (MRAA) to have this petition quashed," Donofrio said. "Overarching restrictions like these need to be based on sound science, not ideological rhetoric. It's simply more anti-fishing, anti-fisherman, doomsday protectionism in the name of loons and loony extremists," Donofrio added.

NACO, MRAA and the RFA said that individual recreational anglers and business owners can get involved by visiting www.joinrfa.org/Press/EPACOMMENTS/DUE091510.pdf to download a copy of a letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson. Simply print the letter, sign it, and stick it in an envelope before September 15, 2010.

"It's a well-known fact that government officials generally don't respond to general emails unless you have a personal email address," Donofrio said. "It's been our experience here at the RFA that a full-blown printed mailing campaign lends a much greater impact in these government offices." He encouraged anglers to get involved by printing out letters to mail off to DC by the end of this week.