



PRESS RELEASE

Recreational Fishing Alliance

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For Immediate Release
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EPA DENIES PETITION SEEKING BAN ON LEAD FISHING TACKLE RFA Members Successfully Weigh-In on Heavy-Metal Issue

(11/4/2010) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has denied a petition calling for a ban on the manufacture, use and processing of lead in fishing gear.

In a letter to the petitioners, EPA indicated that the petitioners have not demonstrated that the requested rule is necessary to protect against an unreasonable risk of injury to health or the environment, as required by the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). The letter further indicates that the increasing number of limitations on the use of lead fishing gear on some federal and state lands, as well as various education and outreach activities, call into question whether a national ban on lead in fishing gear would be the least burdensome, adequately protective approach to address the concern, as called for under TSCA. EPA's letter also notes that the prevalence of non-lead alternatives in the marketplace continues to increase.

"We're happy that EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and her staff have denied this lead ban petition, there was really no justification for it to begin with," said Jim Donofrio, Executive Director of the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA). "If this petition had moved forward, it could've had a devastating impact on our coastal fishing industry."

In September, RFA issued a press release calling on members to send letters to EPA Administrator Jackson asking that the lead ban petition be denied. According to Donofrio, while there may be legitimate concerns raised by the issue of lost lead-based terminal gear used by anglers, 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 in September.

"RFA was happy to weigh in on behalf of the tackle industry, and we're very pleased that RFA members jumped up and wrote letters to the EPA on this important issue," Donofrio said today following the EPA's announcement. "When the recreational anglers get active and engaged, they can beat back this frivolous anti-fishing movement, and this is clear proof." Donofrio said such a ban would've all but eliminated the opportunity for individual anglers to make their own bucktails, sinkers and jigs at home, and would've also meant that fishermen would've had to replace much of their current tackle collections.

On August 3, 2010, the Center for Biological Diversity, American Bird Conservancy, and a number of other groups petitioned EPA under Section 21 of the Toxic Substances Control Act to "prohibit the manufacture, processing, and distribution in commerce of lead for shot, bullets, and fishing sinkers." On August 27, 2010, EPA denied the portion of the petition relating to lead in ammunition because the agency does not have the legal authority to regulate this type of product under TSCA.

View the EPA letter and additional information at www.epa.gov/opptintr/chemtest/pubs/sect21.html
See the RFA's original news alert at www.joinrfa.org/Press/EPALeadBan_090410.pdf

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The Recreational Fishing Alliance is a national, grassroots political action organization representing recreational fishermen and the recreational fishing industry on marine fisheries issues. RFA's Mission is to safeguard the rights of saltwater anglers, protect marine, boat and tackle industry jobs, and ensure the long-term sustainability of our Nation's saltwater fisheries. For more information, call 888-JOIN-RFA or visit www.joinrfa.org.