



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing – January 31, 2011  
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Amey W. Marrella  
Department of Environment Protection

**Committee Senate Bill No. 59 - AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OR USE OF  
FISHING SINKERS, JIGS AND TIRE WEIGHTS THAT CONTAIN LEAD.**

---

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Committee Senate Bill No. 59 - AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OR USE OF FISHING SINKERS, JIGS AND TIRE WEIGHTS THAT CONTAIN LEAD. The Department of Environmental Protection (Department) offers the following testimony on Section 2 of the bill involving lead sinkers and jigs used for fishing.

We understand and appreciate the impetus for this proposal, given the documented toxicity of lead and its history of regulation to protect human and environmental health. However, we are not aware of any evidence suggesting that lead in fishing tackle has an effect on the population level of any species of fish or wildlife in our state. This includes various bird species, such as loons and eagles, for which lead related mortalities have been documented elsewhere.

While alternative materials exist for manufacturing fishing sinkers and jigs, they are more costly, some significantly more so, than those made of lead. As such, an outright ban on the sale and use of lead sinkers and jigs would represent an unreasonable burden to the citizens and fishing related businesses of Connecticut.

As a result of bans enacted in states where wildlife populations have been adversely affected, the fishing industry will gradually shift toward other alternatives. Such a gradual conversion to alternative materials will prevent the sudden increased costs and inconvenience to fishing related businesses and anglers that would ensue under the proposed bill.

The Department is committed to working with supporters of this bill in the conservation community, the recreational angling community, and fishing related businesses (i.e., bait and tackle shops, fish guide services, fishing tackle manufacturers) to promote the use of alternatives to lead in recreational fishing. We believe that this can be accomplished effectively and cost efficiently through outreach efforts.

Should this legislation ultimately move forward, the Department strongly advocates that any prohibitions be limited to the sale of lead sinkers only, and that the prohibition be phased in over

time. Phasing in the ban on sales, while not banning the use of these products, will allow businesses and anglers to convert to alternative materials over time. By not having to discard lead sinkers in stock, businesses and anglers can avoid economic penalties and would also ensure that environmentally unfriendly or unsafe disposal options are not needlessly exercised. Furthermore, the Department would suggest that any ban only affect sinkers equal to and less than ½ oz in mass (a mass of 1 oz or less is proposed) as these smaller and lighter sinkers are significantly more likely to be accidentally ingested by waterfowl than those of greater weight and size. In the event that the bill moves forward, the Department would welcome the opportunity to work with its proponents to develop the bills language.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact the Department's legislative liaison, Robert LaFrance, at (860) 424-3401 or [Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov](mailto:Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov).