



June 9, 2020

RE: Proposed Lead Shot Ban for Shotguns on Wildlife Management Area Shooting Ranges

Position: Oppose

Dear Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources and the Environment and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I respectfully encourage you to oppose the regulation proposed by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) that would ban traditional ammunition for shotguns on Wildlife Management Area (WMA) shooting ranges. We are aware of only one similar prohibition across the country (Assunpink WMA in New Jersey) and are concerned that the proposed regulation is not based on sound science. If enacted, the rule would negatively impact hunters, recreational shooters and conservation funding for the state.

Founded in 1989, CSF's mission is to work with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping. CSF has a strong track record in Louisiana, working with the Louisiana Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and conservation partners to protect and advance Louisiana's sporting heritage by supporting pro-sportsmen's legislation and state fish and wildlife management objectives.

There is no scientific evidence indicating that the use of lead shot for shotguns on WMA shooting ranges has negative population level impacts on wildlife. State fish and wildlife agencies are charged with managing wildlife at the population level, not the individual level, to ensure that management decisions are made in the best interest of conserving wildlife populations in the long run. The LDWF, however, has not provided evidence that wildlife populations have been negatively impacted, and we therefore submit that the rule proposal is not a science-based decision.

Nontraditional ammunition is significantly more expensive than lead shot and is not as readily available for purchase as traditional ammunition. The proposed rule would discourage participation in the shooting sports and would be a hindrance to recruiting more hunters and recreational shooters, which would also threaten the conservation funding system that supports the LDWF. In 2019 alone, Louisiana's hunters

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and recreational shooters contributed \$23.03 million to state-based conservation funding generated through hunting license sales and excise taxes on guns, ammunition and other sporting-related goods. Increases in ammunition costs is a barrier to participation that would lead to reduced funding for the LDWF.

The rule proposal would also discourage the use of WMA shooting ranges which would further reduce funding for the LDWF because fewer Wild Louisiana Stamps (required to access a WMA unless an individual holds a valid state hunting or fishing license) would be sold.

Moreover, nontraditional ammunition is not required for hunting deer, turkey and other species, but hunters that use traditional ammunition would neither be able to practice shooting nor pattern or sight-in their shotguns on WMA shooting ranges. We are concerned about the rule proposal in this regard because shooting proficiently and understanding the capabilities of your gun is a core responsibility of being an ethical hunter.

If reclamation costs are a concern, there are many services that the agency could consult with to plan a reclamation that could defray costs and even generate revenue from the recycled lead.

For additional informational on lead ammunition, please see the attached issue brief from the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation.

Thank you for considering our comments. Let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



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