



Friends of Minnesota Scientific & Natural Areas

April 23, 2020

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair
House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division

VIA E-MAIL ONLY
Peter.Strohmeier@house.mn

Re: HF 3657 – Natural Resources bill (Sec. 35, page 17)

Hearing Date: Friday, April 24, 2020 (12:00 noon)

Support of Non-toxic Shot within Wildlife Management Areas, in Farmland Zone

Dear Chair Hansen and Committee Members:

On behalf of Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas (FMSNA), I thank you for the opportunity to comment on HF 3657, scheduled for hearing on Friday, April 24, 2020.

FMSNA supports the language in HF 3657, Section 35 (page 17, lines 17.16 to 17.30), that **requires non-toxic shot for hunting small game within wildlife management areas in the “farmland zone.”**

In addition, we request the Minnesota Legislature to adopt **comprehensive legislation to require the phase out of lead ammunition and lead fishing tackle – state-wide, on all Minnesota land and waters.**

As background, FMSNA is a Minnesota non-profit, tax-exempt [“501(c)(3)”] corporation organized to protect and enhance Minnesota’s Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs). SNAs are the crown jewels of Minnesota’s state land base, protecting some of Minnesota’s rarest and most sensitive plant and animal species and the ecosystem upon which they depend.

FMSNA is already on record in favor of requiring non-toxic ammunition and non-toxic fishing tackle. On September 3, 2019, FMSNA filed a Petition with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requesting the DNR to adopt rules prohibiting the use of lead ammunition and lead fishing tackle – not just in SNAs – but throughout the State of Minnesota. There is no rational basis for favoring one land classification over another. Lead ammunition and lead fishing tackle are toxic on all land and waters.

Among the organizations supporting our Petition to prohibit lead ammunition and lead fishing tackle are: Izaak Walton League – Minnesota Division; Friends of the Mississippi River, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, Minnesota Herpetological Society, Minnesota Humane Society, Minnesota Ornithologists Union; the Raptor Resource Project; and the St. Croix River Association.

The Minneapolis Star Tribune Editorial Board supports the prohibition of lead ammunition and lead fishing tackle. (See attachment, October 13, 2019, “Getting the Lead Out of Minnesota.”)

As FMSNA stated in its Petition to the DNR, FMSNA recognizes and supports the Minnesota Constitution, Article XIII, Section 12, which states: “Hunting and fishing and the

Rep. Rick Hansen, Chair
House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division
April 17, 2020

taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage that shall be **forever preserved** for the people and **shall be managed by law and regulation for the public good.**" [Emphasis added.] Laws requiring non-toxic ammunition and non-toxic fishing tackle do nothing to deprive a person of their constitutional right to hunt and fish, or their Second Amendment right to bear arms.

As required by law (Minn. Stat. 14.09), the DNR must provide, within 60 days, "specific and detailed reply" to the Petition in writing. On November 4, 2019, the DNR replied, stating the "... proposal is one more appropriately addressed by the **Minnesota legislature.**"

On February 24, 2020, the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee held a hearing on HF 3342, a bill requiring non-toxic shot in wildlife management areas within the "farmland zone." (The authors are Representatives Fue Lee and Representative Jamie Becker-Finn.) Howard Goldman, one of our board members, testified on FMSNA's behalf in favor of this bill.

Therefore, FMSNA **strongly supports** HF 3657, Section 35 (page 17, lines 17.16-17.30), which contains the same language as HF 3342; that is, to require non-toxic shot for small game hunting in wildlife management areas, within the farmland zone. **This is an excellent first step towards a state-wide ban of all lead ammunition and fishing tackle.**

On behalf of FMSNA, I **thank you** in advance for your kind consideration. Please contact me any time, if you have questions or comments.

Very truly yours,

Thomas E. Casey

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Enclosures:

Minneapolis Star Tribune (10/13/19): "Getting the lead out of Minnesota"