



Friends of Minnesota Scientific & Natural Areas

March 4, 2020

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

VIA E-MAIL
rep.rick.hansen@house.mn

Re: March 5, 2020 Agenda Items:

- HF2946 (Acomb) - Raptor protection from lead poisoning funding provided, and money appropriated.
- HF3220 (Becker-Finn) - Fishing; lead tackle trade-in program funding provided, and money appropriated.
- HF3063 (Becker-Finn) - Nontoxic ammunition vouchers funding provided, and money appropriated

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 the above bills, scheduled for hearing on March 5, 2020.

FMSNA supports these bills. In addition, we request the Minnesota Legislature to adopt comprehensive legislation to require the phase out of lead ammunition and lead fishing tackle.

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, and the Raptor Resource Project.

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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 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.**”

These bills are important tools as part of the process to legally phase out lead ammunition and lead fishing tackle. FMSNA also supports Representative Fischer’s bill (HF 3825/SF 3892) that phases out lead fishing tackle – manufacture and sale by 2023 and the use of lead fishing tackle by 2024. (Please note there are typos in both bills; lines 1.13 and line 2.7 should be fixed by changing “may” to “shall.”) Similar language should be drafted to phase out lead ammunition.

In summary, please adopt these bills as important educational tools in our effort to rid Minnesota of toxic lead ammunition and toxic fishing tackle.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Very truly yours,



Thomas E. Casey
Board Chair
Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas, Inc

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FMSNA Board of Directors

Enclosures:

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