

CHRISTOPHER LEE

Director, Government Relations - State Affairs

clee@nssf.org | 203-434-4330 | nssf.org

April 10, 2023

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair
Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Prohibition of Lead Ammunition for Taking Small Game on WMAs **Position: Oppose**

Dear Chair Hansen:

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) strongly opposes language in HF2310 (Hansen) which would ban the use of traditional, or lead, ammunition while hunting on wildlife management areas in Minnesota.

As the trade association for America's firearm, ammunition, hunting, and recreational shooting sports industry, NSSF seeks to promote, protect, and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. NSSF has a membership of approximately 10,000 manufacturers, distributors, firearms retailers, shooting ranges, and sportsmen's organizations. Our manufacturer members make the firearms used by law-abiding Minnesota sportsmen and women, the U.S. military, and law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

The proposed prohibition of the choice of lead shot on WMAs will undoubtedly cause an artificial shift in supply and demand that will result in an increase in the price of alternative ammunition. While growing in popularity with hunters, alternative ammunition made of copper, tungsten, bismuth, and steel are more expensive to produce and purchase than their counterparts.

Coupled with the ammunition shortage we are currently experiencing, removing lead shot as an ammunition choice is certain to have a detrimental impact on the number of hunters choosing to purchase Minnesota hunting licenses. Barriers for hunters affect not only sportsmen and women and Minnesota's tourism economy, but wildlife and conservation efforts in Minnesota in lost license revenue as well as collection of Pittman-Robertson funds which contributes 11% of every ammunition purchase to wildlife management and habitat. For FY22, that amounted to \$32,250,271 that Minnesota received from USFWS to be used for wildlife conservation.

Our industry is proud of its strong presence and economic impact in Minnesota and are mindful of the important role sportsmen play in Minnesota's economy. Our membership includes Minnesota-based federally licensed firearms retailers, most of which are small "mom-n-pop" businesses that are the backbone of the state's economy, and large ammunition manufacturers such as Federal Premium Ammunition. In 2022, the Minnesota firearm industry employed over 13,000 Minnesotans and had an economic impact of over \$3.6 billion on the state. Banning lead ammunition on WMAs and creating an artificial shift in the market could lead to the closure of small businesses impacting mostly rural communities.

Additionally, any action taken by the legislature that leads to the reduction in the number of hunters or creates barriers for new or reactivated hunters will adversely affect management and restoration of wildlife in Minnesota. Raptor populations are thriving in Minnesota and across the country thanks to investments in wildlife conservation, which have been funded largely by the firearm industry through the sale of firearms and ammunition. Attempts to ban lead ammunition are based on emotion and would certainly have a negative impact on Minnesota.

For these reasons, the NSSF strongly opposes any attempt to ban the use of lead ammunition, or lead shot, also known as traditional ammunition.

Respectfully,



Christopher Lee