



Alberta Fish & Game Association

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AFGA Position Paper, March 2004

Proposed Ban of Lead Jigs and Sinkers

On February 17, 2004 the Federal Environment Minister, David Anderson, announced that the federal government intends to introduce a ban on the import, manufacture and sale of lead fishing sinkers and jigs in Canada.

In respect to the announcement the **Alberta Fish and Game Association is opposed to the proposed regulated ban of lead jigs and sinkers** and provide explanatory comments as they relate to the following specific issues: consultation, cost to anglers, scientific evidence, monitoring program, declining angler numbers, and voluntary action.

1.0 Consultation

The AFGA is concerned with the lack of consultation with the fishing community and the outdoor organizations that represent them.

2.0 Cost To Anglers

Banning of lead in sinkers and jigs would have a negative affect on the anglers of the country in the forms of increased costs, especially when an alternative has not been readily available, and also the manufacture of substitute products has not been taken to a level where the angling community have full knowledge on these products.

3.0 Scientific Evidence That Problems Occur in Alberta

No scientific evidence of problems with sinkers or jigs in birds exists in Alberta.

The AFGA takes the opinion, as many other outdoor organizations do, that lead shot, and lead jigs and sinkers present a relatively low risk to our wildlife, fish and habitat.

4.0 Monitoring Program

The AFGA supports a monitoring program that would assess over the long-term any possible environmental effects from lead jigs and sinkers on birds or other components of the aquatic ecosystem.

5.0 Declining Angler Numbers in Alberta

The AFGA is mindful that with the increased regulations that have incurred when lead shot was banned for the harvesting of migratory birds, hunter numbers decreased. Many more costs were put on the outdoor community to accept this change, these in turn will also presumably happen to the angling fraternity.

Resident angler numbers have declined over 40% in the past 20 years. The AFGA does not want to see a further decline in the numbers of anglers.

6.0 Voluntary Action From Anglers

The AFGA also supports the voluntary use of alternatives to lead jigs and sinkers.

In 1998 the AFGA revised its own policy on the use of lead shot. As the largest and oldest conservation group in the province of Alberta, we encouraged our members and the hunting community to purchase and use non-toxic shot on a voluntary basis. We also stated that “as non-toxic shot, including alternatives to steel, becomes more available, shooters can be encouraged to make changes”.

Through a voluntary program, with a public awareness & education campaign, plus the ability to still carry and be in possession of lead jigs and sinkers, and the grandfathering of such materials, such would be an acceptable transition.

In the future hopefully new, cost effective alternatives can be made available to the Canadian angling public, which will also encourage our future sportsman to enjoy and pursue the sport of angling. The AFGA believes in increasing hunter and angler numbers, and through education, science and communication, not restrictive regulations, we can ensure that this will occur.

The Alberta Fish and Game Association is a non-for-profit volunteer organization that has been active in habitat conservation since 1908 and has a province-wide membership of well over 14,000 individuals committed to maintaining Alberta’s natural heritage.

AFGA

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