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**L.A. Unleashed** *All things animal in Southern California and beyond*

## Environmental Protection Agency denies conservationists' petition to ban lead ammunition

By Lindsay Barnett

The Environmental Protection Agency announced late last month that it has denied a petition calling for a ban on lead ammunition in an effort to protect wild scavengers that can be poisoned by eating the flesh of other animals contaminated with lead.

A diverse group of organizations, including both wildlife advocacy groups and a hunters group called Project Gutpile, had urged the EPA earlier in the month to implement a ban on both lead ammunition and fishing tackle. The groups argued that animals, including protected species like the California condor, regularly become sickened or die after feeding on the carcasses of other animals killed with lead bullets or accidentally ingesting lead bullet fragments or fishing weights.

A representative said in a statement that the EPA had denied the petition about lead ammunition on the grounds that “the agency

does not have the legal authority to regulate this type of product under the Toxic Substances Control Act -- nor is the agency seeking

such authority.” The issue of a proposed ban on lead fishing tackle will be considered separately because “there are no similar jurisdictional issues relating to the agency’s authority over fishing sinkers,” the statement continued.

The groups that had argued in favor of a lead-shot ban expressed disappointment. Adam Keats, senior counsel for the Center for Biological Diversity, one of the groups behind the petition, said his group “strongly [believes] that the EPA has the clear authority and duty to regulate this very harmful and toxic substance as used in bullets and shot, despite the so-called exemption for lead ammunition that is written into TSCA.” The Center for Biological Diversity remains committed to resolving the issue, Keats said.



Photo: Anthony Prieto of Project Gutpile holds a non-lead bullet, left, and a lead bullet, right. Credit: Spencer Weiner / Los Angeles Times

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