



NRA request for info on lead bullets draws tart reply from activists

BY Laura Petersen / E&E reporter
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A request by the National Rifle Association for information about how lead bullets threaten California condors drew a quick response today from an environmental group promoting a ban on lead ammunition.

The Center for Biological Diversity cited numerous scientific articles and the Fish and Wildlife Service website in a four-page letter to NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre.

“We regret that your legal counsel has not been able to find any of the readily available public information regarding the mechanisms of lead poisoning of endangered condors, the source of lead that is poisoning condors, the magnitude of the threat, the status of reintroduced condor populations, the causes of mortality for reintroduced condors and recent condor deaths,” CBD Executive Director Kieran Suckling wrote.

The NRA’s legal counsel had requested information about a press release CBD issued last month highlighting the recent deaths of seven condors in the Grand Canyon flock. Three deaths were definitively linked to lead poi-

soning -- the birds ingest lead bullet fragments when they scavenge. The Fish and Wildlife Service treats 10 to 12 percent of the tiny population for lead poisoning each hunting season (Greenwire, April 30).

“At the risk of being too forward, may I suggest that you deploy a small portion of the NRA’s considerable resources to hire a wildlife biologist?” Suckling wrote.

While seeming to poke fun at the NRA, Suckling appears to make a real offer to help the group craft policies on lead ammo and urged it to take a stand against lead ammo.

“A statement by the NRA in favor of phasing out lead bullets in order to ensure the health of hunters and their families, save endangered condors, and stop the poisoning of bald eagles and other wildlife would be looked upon very favorably by the majority of Americans,” he wrote.