

**Michael J. Kosnett, MD, MPH, DFACMT**  
**Diplomate, American Boards of Internal Medicine,**  
**Preventive Medicine (Occupational Medicine), and Medical Toxicology**

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*Toxicology Consulting Office:*

4495 Hale Parkway, Suite 301  
Denver, CO 80220  
(303) 571-5778

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Re: Colorado Amendment 83 (Constitutional Right to Hunt and Fish) and the Harms of Lead-Based Ammunition to Wildlife and Human Health

As a physician specializing in medical toxicology and occupational and environmental health, I have devoted much of my career to preventing and managing lead poisoning. I am deeply concerned that Colorado Amendment 83, the “Right to Hunt and Fish Amendment,” could thwart an important aspect of lead-poisoning prevention. By establishing a right to hunt “by use of traditional methods,” the amendment could be interpreted to prevent future Colorado public-health regulations requiring hunters to substitute lead-free ammunition for lead ammunition when hunting game.

Thirteen years ago, I joined fourteen other scientists who study and work to prevent lead poisoning in writing [an editorial](#) for Environmental Health Perspectives. We advocated for restrictions on the use of lead ammunition in hunting because of the risks it poses to human health and the environment. When a child eats meat from deer, fowl, or other game harvested with lead ammunition, the child may consume small—even microscopically hidden—fragments of lead bullets, increasing the amount of lead in the child’s system. Our editorial emphasized the indisputable fact that no level of lead exposure in children is known to be without adverse health effects. Lead ingestion may also contribute to adverse reproductive outcomes in pregnant women and cardiovascular disease in adults. Hunters could readily avoid this hazard by using widely available lead-free ammunition, including copper bullets. Partly in response to this avoidable risk, California enacted regulations in 2013 banning lead ammunition for hunting. The right to hunt continues to exist in California, provided that hunting is conducted without lead ammunition. In October 2026, the European Commission also adopted restrictions on the use of lead-containing gunshot for hunting. Colorado could take similar action. Future protections could reduce the possibility that game meat intended to nourish Colorado families instead contributes toxic amounts of lead to their diets. If Amendment 83 passes, however, enacting this commonsense health protection in Colorado could become more difficult.

I urge Coloradans to join me in voting No on Amendment 83 and, in doing so, to preserve the possibility of future public health measures that would reduce lead exposure among hunters and their families and prevent lead contamination of the environment.



Michael J. Kosnett, MD, MPH, DFACMT  
Associate Adjunct Professor  
Department of Environmental and Occupational Health  
Colorado School of Public Health *(for identification only, not a communication from CSPH)*