



DEPARTMENT OF MICROBIOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL TOXICOLOGY
DIVISION OF NATURAL SCIENCE
1156 HIGH ST
SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA

Oct 6th, 2026

Fr: Donald Smith, PhD
Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Microbiology and Environmental Toxicology
University of California
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

Myra Finkelstein, PhD
Adjunct Professor of Microbiology and Environmental Toxicology
University of California
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

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

We, Dr. Donald Smith and Dr. Myra Finkelstein are renowned experts in the fields of human, wildlife, and environmental health with over 50 years of combined experience and over 150 peer-reviewed published research papers related to lead exposure and toxicity. Further, our work was instrumental in informing and supporting the passage of two legislative bills in California (AB 821 and AB 711) that led to the partial and subsequent full banning of lead-based ammunition for hunting in California.

We are writing to raise serious concerns about Amendment 83 and the threat it poses to future efforts to protect Colorado's wildlife and people from lead poisoning.

The scientific evidence that lead harms both wildlife and human health is beyond dispute. Inserting "traditional methods" into the state constitution would make new protective measures, such as limits on lead ammunition, hard and perhaps impossible to adopt in the years ahead. Hunting with lead ammunition should not be a constitutional right as it is a serious risk to human and wildlife health.

We support every effort to increase the use of non-lead ammunition for hunting, knowing that this will lead to a decrease in the risk of lead exposure to humans and wildlife because:

- The discharge of lead-based ammunition and accumulation of spent lead-based ammunition in the environment poses significant health risks to humans and wildlife.
- The discharge of lead into the environment, via the use of lead-based ammunition for hunting, remains one of the most significant and largely unregulated sources of lead contamination.

- Lead is among the most well-studied anthropogenic toxins, and there is overwhelming scientific evidence that demonstrates lead is toxic to multiple physiological systems in vertebrate organisms, including the central and peripheral nervous, renal, cardiovascular, reproductive, immune, and hematologic systems.

In particular, our research has shown that:

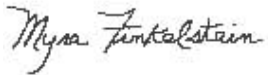
- Avian wildlife scavengers (e.g., Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, California Condors, New Zealand Kea) are poisoned from ingestion of lead-based ammunition from feeding on contaminated carcasses and remains discarded in the environment.
- Our recent publication in the prestigious scientific journal *Nature Communications* shows that the lead ammunition bans in California (AB 821, AB 711) successfully reduced California Condor lead poisoning risk, demonstrating the efficacy of legislation requiring non-lead ammunition for hunting to protect wildlife health.

The science on lead toxicity is well-established and to protect human and wildlife health, the use of lead ammunition for hunting should not be enshrined as a constitutional right.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald Smith".

Donald Smith, PhD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Myra Finkelstein".

Myra Finkelstein, PhD