



**Flathead Audubon Society**

PO Box 9173  
Kalispell, MT 59904

April 4, 2017

Dear Senator Tester:

Your recent support of the Secretary of Interior's reversal of a decision to phase-out lead ammunition and fishing tackle on national wildlife refuges was very disappointing. The adverse toxic effects of lead bullets and fishing tackle on multiple species of wildlife have long been known. Use of lead shotshells for waterfowl hunting was banned decades ago on all ownerships due to the demonstrated adverse effects. The adverse effects are just as bad on multiple other species.

Non-toxic ammunition and fishing tackle are available and have been shown to be effective substitutes. These alternatives to lead are rapidly becoming more widely distributed at retailers and prices are dropping as more people use them so they are viable alternatives. There is no good reason to continue the lead poisoning of our Montana wildlife that we all cherish when there are economical, viable alternatives available. The national wildlife refuges are excellent locations to be a showplace for these viable alternatives.

The Wildlife Society, a national organization of wildlife professionals, adopted a position statement in 2009 endorsing precisely the sort of phase-out that was just reversed by Secretary Zinke. Please avoid the politics, use the best available science, protect Montana's wildlife that contribute to making Montana what it is, and support reinstatement of the phase-out.

Kay Mitchell  
President  
Flathead Audubon Society