



Friends of Minnesota Scientific & Natural Areas

March 29, 2023

VIA E-MAIL ONLY

kara.josephson@senate.mn

Senator Fong Hawj, Chair, and
Senate Environment, Climate, and Energy Committee

Re: **Request Amendment to SF 2438A-3 Amendment
Shooting Sports Facilities Grants - \$600,000 (page 34, lines 34.1 to 34.15)**
Scheduled for Committee Hearing, Thursday, March 30, 2023

Dear Chair Hawj and Committee Members:

Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas (FMSNA) is a Minnesota non-profit, tax-exempt [“501(c)(3)”] corporation organized to protect and enhance Minnesota’s Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs). SNAs are the “crown jewels” of Minnesota’s state land base, protecting some of Minnesota’s rarest and most sensitive plant and animal species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

First, it is important to state that FMSNA recognizes and fully supports the Minnesota Constitution, including Article XIII, Section 12, which states: “**Hunting and fishing** and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage that shall be **forever preserved** for the people and **shall be managed by law and regulation for the public good.**” [Emphasis added.]

FMSNA also recognizes that the science is clear. Lead is a potent neurotoxin, for which **no safe exposure level exists.** [Emphasis added.] <https://www.lung.org/clean-air/at-home/indoor-air-pollutants/lead> [Last visited 3/4/23.]

FMSNA supports shooting sports as an important part of our national heritage. We are pleased that the Minnesota State High School Clay Target League (the “League”) states on its website: “**Safe** and **responsible** handling and storage of firearms and ammunition is the **first priority.**” [Emphasis added.] <http://mnclaytarget.com/about-us/mission/> [Last visited, 3/19/23.]

Therefore, FMSNA has concerns that the SF 2438-A3 amendment, in its present form, could increase the proliferation of toxic lead ammunition in shooting sports facilities – adding to the adverse impacts of lead on wildlife and humans. To quote two words from the League, the use of lead ammunition is neither “safe” nor “responsible.”

Simply stated, Minnesota **taxpayers should not subsidize the proliferation of toxic lead ammunition.**

Therefore, we respectfully request that SF 2438A-3, page 34, lines 34.1 – 34.15 be **amended** to add the following language in **red font**:

“Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, section 297A.94, \$300,000 the first year and \$300,000 the second year are from the heritage enhancement account in the game and fish fund for shooting sports facility grants under Minnesota Statutes, section 87A.10,

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including grants for archery facilities. Grants must be matched with a nonstate match, which may include in-kind contributions. As a condition for grant approval, the shooting sports facility must: (1) prohibit the use of lead ammunition; and (2) provide an educational component regarding the toxic effects of lead ammunition and non-toxic ammunition alternatives. This is a onetime appropriation and is available until June 30, 2026. This appropriation must be allocated as follows: (1) \$200,000 each fiscal year is for grants of \$25,000 or less; and (2) \$100,000 each fiscal year is for grants in excess of \$25,000.”

As a reminder, we are on record advocating that the Minnesota Legislature adopt comprehensive legislation to require the phase out of lead ammunition and lead fishing tackle – state-wide - on all Minnesota land and waters.

FMSNAs looks forward to working with you – and other legislators on both sides of the aisle – to promote the passage of this bill, with our requested amendment, and to adopt subsequent legislation to **phase out the use of lead ammunition and lead fishing tackle on all of Minnesota’s land and waters.**

On behalf of FMSNA, I **thank you** in advance for your kind consideration. Please contact me any time, if you have questions or comments.

Very truly yours,

Thomas E. Casey

Thomas E. Casey
Board Chair
Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas, Inc.

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**The following organizations and individuals have signed on
in support of this letter:**

Minnesota Division, Izaak Walton League of Minnesota
Carrol L. Henderson, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (retired)
Pat Redig, Founder & Director Emeritus, The Raptor Center, University of Minnesota
Julia Ponder, DVM, MPH; Former Director, The Raptor Center, University of Minnesota;
Associate Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Minnesota
Audubon Minnesota