

# Letter from BASC to the Secretary of State

Our ref: AH/Corres/JPH091126HB

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP Secretary of State Department of Environment,  
Food and Rural Affairs  
Nobel House 17  
Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3JR

26th November 2009

Dear Secretary of State,

I write on behalf of all the organisations listed at the end of this letter, who have given their support for its content.

The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and RSPB recently made us aware of their writing to you summarising some recent scientific findings regarding the potential risk to human and wildlife health caused by the use of lead ammunition. They recommend that a wider group of interested stakeholders be convened by Government to address this.

The organisations signing this letter are aware of that correspondence. All the evidence bearing on this important matter must be addressed seriously and justifies reasoned attention by all the organisations involved in shooting activities.

We draw your attention, however, to recent research commissioned by our organisations underlining the popularity, diversity, economic and environmental value of shooting sports in the United Kingdom (<http://www.shootingfacts.co.uk/>). The use of appropriate ammunition and compatible sporting firearms is fundamental to that value. The diversity and scale of shooting sports underlines the importance of winning of the hearts and minds of the hundreds of thousands of participants, as well as those whose livelihoods and businesses depend on shooting, for any recommendations that might emerge as necessary for the protection of the environment and human health.

We believe that the WWT and RSPB letter provides a certain perspective. Any working group, however, will have to take an objective risk management approach to the diversity of issues involved. Such an approach will be essential for assessing the evidence robustly, judging the scale of the risks to the environment and human health in proper context, raising awareness and support among different affected groups essential for the delivery of positive outcomes, and resolving issues connected with the development of lead substitutes and the implications of their use in the variety of shooting disciplines.

We recognise that this will not be an easy task. In the meantime we stress that the shooting community does not believe that the case for sweeping legislative or regulatory restrictions on the use of lead ammunition has been made.

It may be helpful to be aware that the organisations signing this letter have already met in August as a Lead in Ammunition Technical Working Group and are meeting again in December. The purposes of this industry group are to ensure that all the different representatives know what is going on, take a clearer view of the key issues and better brief their decision-making bodies.

We believe that this existing industry group provides an appropriate forum for this matter to be addressed. We wish to have a constructive dialogue with your Department and government agencies, especially those with responsibility for environment and health.

Yours sincerely

John Swift  
Chief Executive

British Association for Shooting and Conservation  
British Deer Society  
Clay Pigeon Shooting Association  
Countryside Alliance  
Country Land and Business Association  
Deer Initiative Ltd  
Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust  
Gun Trade Association  
Moorland Association  
National Game Dealers Association  
National Gamekeepers Organisation