



Written by [Robert Confer](#) on February 11, 2013

Anglers Beware: Environmentalists Have Set Sights on Plastic Worms

Soft plastic fishing lures, such as plastic worms and tube jigs, have a proven track record of being the best artificial baits on the market, especially for the likes of bass and panfish. On the strength of these lures, professional anglers have won numerous tournaments and secured good incomes, while the average weekend fisherman has landed many a trophy and filled countless frying pans.



Those days of outstanding angling success might be numbered. Believe it or not, environmentalists have set their sights on these lures. They say that soft plastics pollute the waters and can be consumed by aquatic wildlife like loons, ducks, and otters. They also say that plastic worms sit in the bellies of fish that were lucky enough to get away, [slowly killing them over time](#).

Never one to ignore the concerns or demands of environmentalists — no matter how extreme or unfounded some of their views may be — government has picked up on the alleged ills of plastic baits. In Maine, [state representative Paul Davis introduced a bill](#) on January 17 that would ban the use of “rubber worms” (the catch-all term for soft plastics baits) within the state.

The bill was met with ire from fisherman not only in Maine, but from across the United States, as well. [A public hearing on the bill was standing room only](#), while a leading angling organization, BASS (the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society), [submitted testimony](#). Because of the public’s reaction — and the fact that Representative Davis didn’t even seek cosponsors because he knew it was a controversial topic — it’s likely that the bill will come to a quick demise.

Even so, anglers everywhere shouldn’t discount the fact that this legislation has started a conversation that may haunt them in the coming years. This is the first bill of its kind to appear in any state government — but it won’t be the last. Environmentalists are extremely opportunistic; they will pick up on this — as will state governments across the land, ultimately working to the federal level and the likes of the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service. State governments are Petri dishes for environmental causes: Lessons are learned there, and policies are developed that can become standards for our nation. Consider the California Air Resources Board, which has been responsible for everything from [expensive fuel tanks on lawn mowers, all-terrain vehicles, and boats](#) to the [destruction of the incandescent light bulb industry](#).

A common thread in the green movement and modern-day federal policy is social engineering. Under this practice, environmentalists and policymakers limit the human experience and its impact on the environment — and its impact on government — by devising a set of norms that limit the pursuit of liberty and demand that people conform to standard practice utilized by the collective.

In recent years, social engineering has been used to deeply affect food freedom. The federal government has proposed [regulating roadside fruit and vegetable stands](#), while [vilifying those who enjoy raw milk](#) and [defining what our children are allowed to eat at school](#).



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Post-Sandy Hook anti-gun laws unleashed throughout the United States fall into the same category, as they affect hunters who own guns solely to exercise their right to fill the freezer and put food on the table.

The proposed ban on plastic worms is just the latest dose of lifestyle engineering. By having his access to the most effective of lures limited, the working man who fishes for food as much as pleasure will see his catch rates drop, and he will have to feed his family by spending his hard-earned money at the grocery store on farm-raised fish, which were raised utilizing the latest in GMO science, [including federally beloved but potentially dangerous Frankenfish](#).

So while a plastic bait ban may only be in its infancy and destined for failure in Maine, it certainly poses a long-term threat to anglers everywhere, one that should be taken seriously. There may be a day 10 or 20 years from now when our favorite bait isn't allowed on the water. The only way to prevent that from becoming a reality is to take an active role in policy at the state level, and beat the environmental activists at their own game. This is about more than rubber worms — it's about freedom.



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