



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on November 6, 2013

EPA Closure of Last Lead Smelting Plant to Impact Ammunition Production

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is not content to infringe on property rights; recent actions taken against the country's last lead smelting facility will affect the right to keep and bear arms, as well, by substantially impacting the production of ammunition. As of December 31, 2013, the lead refining plant will close for good.



The [St. Louis Post-Dispatch reports](#):

About 145 employees of the Doe Run lead smelter [in Herculaneum, Missouri] learned they will lose their jobs at the end of December because of the plant's closure, the Doe Run Co. said Wednesday. An additional 73 contractor jobs also will be eliminated.

The job cuts were expected. The plant, which has operated for more than a century and is the lone remaining lead smelter in the United States, announced in 2010 that it will cease operations at the end of this year.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said the company "made a business decision" to shut down the smelter instead of installing pollution control technologies needed to reduce sulfur dioxide and lead emissions as required by the Clean Air Act.

That all sounds so very sterile, but the truth of the matter is that in shuttering this plant, the Obama administration has taken yet another unconstitutional step, one that will severely impinge on the nation's ammunition manufacturing capability. Why would the Doe Run Company, the owners of the Missouri lead smelting facility, agree to being run out of business by the EPA? One word: extortion.

In [a document published on its website](#), the EPA explains that in order for Doe Run to continue its operations, the company would have to agree to pay "\$65 million to correct violations of several environmental laws at 10 of its lead mining, milling and smelting facilities in southeast Missouri. The settlement also requires the company to pay a \$7 million civil penalty."

In a statement to the press, Doe Run said the fine and the required upgrades to its facilities were "too financially risky."

The effect on the right to keep and bear arms is obvious. As [explained by the National Rifle Association \(NRA\)](#):

The Herculaneum smelter is currently the only smelter in the United States which can produce lead bullion from raw lead ore that is mined nearby in Missouri's extensive lead deposits, giving the smelter its "primary" designation. The lead bullion produced in Herculaneum is then sold to lead product producers, including ammunition manufacturers for use in conventional ammunition



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components such as projectiles, projectile cores, and primers. Several “secondary” smelters, where lead is recycled from products such as lead acid batteries or spent ammunition components, still operate in the United States.

Without ammunition, a gun is just a club. The government knows this, and in light of the ongoing project of arming federal agencies to the teeth with millions of rounds of ammunition and military-grade weapons and vehicles, the EPA’s closing of the Doe Run plant, although not a direct assault on the right to keep and bear arms, can be seen as another step toward civilian disarmament.

While a few other media outlets have reported on the closure, none has connected this dot to a couple of others in the overall plan to leave Americans without weapons and ammunition.

First, the EPA’s closing of the country’s last lead smelting facility follows close on the heels (within a little over a month) of [Secretary of State John Kerry’s signing of the United Nations’ Arms Trade Treaty \(ATT\)](#) “on behalf of President Barack Obama and the people of the United States.”

Article 3 of that agreement outlaws the buying, selling, trading, or transferring by civilians of all “ammunition/munitions fired, launched or delivered by the conventional arms.”

By making it impossible to manufacture ammunition, it becomes impossible for civilians to own it. Mind you, such prohibitions do not apply to government. In fact, under the Arms Trade Treaty, the national governments of member countries are given monopoly control of the entire ammunition stockpile of that country.

Another dot not being identified by other outlets reporting on the Doe Run story is the relationship of the closure to another multinational agreement: the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

What does the United States’ membership in the TPP have to do with the EPA’s forced closure of a lead smelting plant — a plant, while not critical to the manufacture of ammunition, certainly important to that crucial function?

Two of the countries from which the United States will now be importing lead are Peru and Australia — two members of the 13-nation bloc participating in the TPP.

The third exporter that the United States will soon rely on for the lead necessary to make ammunition? China. Although China isn’t currently negotiating with the other Pacific Rim countries in establishing the TPP, on November 1, the [Chinese state-run media reported](#):

China and the United States strongly intend to engage each other in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a “high-standard” trade agreement involving the US and other countries including Japan and Australia, according to insiders close to both governments.

China’s leaders see entering into regional trade and agreements as an opportunity for the nation to pursue market-oriented reform and transform its economic development pattern.

Those goals will be high on the agenda next week when the Third Plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China convenes in Beijing.

“I was informed by high-level US officials recently that the US side hasn’t meant to exclude China from the TPP trade arrangement,” said Long Yongtu, who was China’s chief negotiator for its entry into the World Trade Organization.

Long commented on Friday at the start of a two-day international forum on emerging economies, which was organized by the China Institute for Reform and Development.



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“The Chinese side is also taking an active interest in the TPP. When it’s ready, we are going to launch negotiations with the US,” Long added.

In November 2011, President Obama tipped his hand in this high-stakes game of trade talks when [he told Chinese media](#), “Now, if China says, we want to consult with you about being part of this [the TPP] as well, we welcome that.”

Connect those dots and the picture gets clearer: The Obama administration will stop at nothing to absolutely abolish the right of the people to keep and bear arms. The means to this end are mounting: first, the flurry of executive orders unconstitutionally infringing on that right; second, the signing of a UN treaty explicitly calling for the disarmament of civilians, including the restriction on the purchase of ammunition; third, although the shutdown of domestic lead smelting capacity does not signal the end of domestic production of ammunition, it does indirectly force Americans to turn to fellow members of the unconstitutional sovereignty-stealing Trans-Pacific Partnership, as well as to communist China for a key component of ammunition manufacturing.

There is still a way for Americans determined to preserve the right to keep and bear arms to fight back against the federal assault.

Congress must be called upon to immediately defund the EPA and repeal the act that created it, as well as to refuse to ratify any treaty — the Arms Trade Treaty and the Trans-Pacific Partnership — that infringes on the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Once these basic rights are surrendered to unelected, unaccountable international bodies, those rights will be regarded as fungible and revocable at the will of global bureaucrats bent on finally eliminating the Constitution.

Joe A. Wolverton, II, J.D. is a correspondent for The New American and travels frequently nationwide speaking on topics of nullification, the NDAA, and the surveillance state. He is the host of The New American Review radio show that is simulcast on YouTube every Monday. Follow him on Twitter @TNAJoeWolverton and he can be reached at jwolverton@thenewamerican.com

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