



The Log: SB 187: Questions About About Fishing License Bill's Failure

 Parimal M. Rohit October 19, 2017

Shifting to a 12-month fishing license cycle had broad support and no opposition, so why did it fail?

SACRAMENTO — It's no secret money and politics go together. What remains secretive is how money dictates the policies directly governing our lives. Some questioned whether money was a factor in the sudden demise of a proposal to overhaul California's fishing license system.

No sooner did the bill fail to emerge out of the Assembly's Appropriations Committee did California's anglers look to the board's membership and question why they failed to recommend Senate Bill 187 (SB 187) for passage.

Some pondered whether Assembly member Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher, who chaired the Appropriations Committee, had incentive to kill the bill. Gonzalez Fletcher, interestingly enough, represents San Diego, which is one of California's top destinations for anglers.

The Log reached out to Gonzalez's office and made initial contact with one of her staff members, hoping to gain some perspective as to why SB 187 failed to cross the finish line despite overwhelming support and no known opposition.

When asked for an explanation as to why SB 187 was not recommended to move forward out of committee, her office went radio silent; her press representative, Alex Roth, has not yet responded to *The Log's* questions. We specifically asked why SB 187 did not make it out of Appropriations despite having no opposition on record or during any stage of voting.

We also asked why the bill was killed in Appropriations Committee when five of its members voted in favor of SB 187 while sitting on another committee.

Of course there might well be a reasonable answer for why SB 187, which many of its proponents considered to be a common sense proposal, was killed in the

[Type here]

Appropriations Committee. *The Log* will continue searching for answers beyond this particular story. Readers are also encouraged to reach out to members of the Appropriations Committee and ask questions of their elected representatives. As we pursue our quest for answers, let us look back on how we arrived to today's current predicament.

SB 187: A Quick Recap

SB 187, had it made it out of the legislature and later signed into law, would have established a 12-month cycle for fishing licenses. All fishing licenses in California expire Dec. 31, regardless of when purchased. The state does not prorate the license fee for later purchases.

More than 50 organizations and agencies supported the proposal, according to an Assembly analysis in June. The same analysis listed zero opponents and 3,211 individual supporters.

The 12-month license proposal also garnered unanimous support as it moved through the State Senate. Three State Senate committees approved SB 187 by 9-0, 7-0 and 7-0 votes, respectively. All 40 senators voted in favor of the bill when it came to a full vote on May 31.

State Sen. Tom Berryhill's proposal also earned unanimous support – 15-0 vote – in the Assembly's Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee.

Unanimous votes on five occasions and no listed opposition to the bill naturally caused anglers to wonder why SB 187 was held during the late stages of this year's legislative process.

Appropriations Committee

It is common for legislative proposals with a fiscal effect to be forwarded to the State Senate's or Assembly's Appropriations Committee when it is relatively close to being approved by both houses and forwarded to the governor for signature or veto.

SB 187 jumped through all the hurdles in the State Senate, meaning Assembly support was necessary for it to move forward. The Assembly's Appropriations Committee, accordingly, was the proposal's final stop; it would not be voted on by the lower house's full membership without the committee's positive recommendation.

[Type here]

The announcement of which bills are recommended for a full vote and which aren't often comes without explanation, so anglers and fishing groups were left in the dark as to why the Appropriations Committee did not recommend SB 187 for a full vote.

Gov. Jerry Brown, by comparison, issues a veto message every time he rejects a legislative proposal. The veto message is made public on his website and easily accessible for everyone to see. Each message offers a one- or two-paragraph explanation of what Brown believed to be the bill's shortcoming(s).

Why is such transparency prevalent at the executive level but not with a legislative committee's decision?

Overlapping Committee Members?

The 12-month fishing license proposal, as mentioned above, did not receive a single opposition vote as it moved through the legislature. Of note are the handful of Appropriations Committee members who also sit on the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee.

At least five Assembly members serve on both committees, which were the final two boards to review SB 187 before it was killed; 17 Assembly members sit on Appropriations, while 15 serve on Water, Parks and Wildlife.

All five members who sit on both committees had supported SB 187 when Water, Parks and Wildlife deliberated the proposal. Did those five Assembly members still support SB 187 when it shifted to Appropriations? Perhaps one, some or all of them changed their mind? Or maybe they still supported the proposal but couldn't convince other Appropriations Committee members to join them in support?

Such questions aren't unreasonable to ask when a proposal moves through the process unopposed but is suddenly killed toward the end without explanation – particularly when some members on the committee that killed the bill were also on another committee where it was unanimously supported.

The five Assembly members, by the way, are Frank Bigelow, Raul Bocanegra, Laura Friedman, James Gallagher and Eduardo Garcia. Bigelow serves as vice-chair

[Type here]

of the Appropriations Committee.

Also sitting on the Appropriations Committee, are Assembly members Gonzalez-Fletcher, Richard Bloom, Rob Bonta, William Brough, Ian Calderon, Ed Chau, Susan Talamantes Eggman, Vince Fong, Adam Gray, Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Jay Obernolte and Eloise G. Reyes.

Organizations and Agencies In Support of SB 187

Among the organizations and agencies in support of SB 187, according to an Assembly analysis of the bill, were: Abu Garcia, Berkley Fishing, CalAsian Chamber of Commerce, California Association for Recreational Fishing, California Association of Harbor Masters and Port Captains, California Chamber of Commerce, California Hotel & Lodging Association, California Parks Company, California Sportfishing League (Sponsor), California Yacht Brokers Association, County of Mariposa, Fred Hall Shows, Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce, Mammoth Lakes Tourism, Marina Recreation Association, Mono County Fisheries Commission, Orange County Business Council, Oxnard Chamber of Commerce, Penn Fishing, Pure Fishing, Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, San Diego Regional Chamber, San Diego Tourism Authority, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce, Santa Monica Travel & Tourism, Sportfishing Association of California, Visit Huntington Beach and Western Outdoor News.

Reaching Out

Feel free to contact Gonzalez or Bigelow for questions about SB 187. Gonzalez Fletcher's office phone numbers are 916-319-2080 and 619-338-8090. Bigelow can be contacted at 916-319-2005, 559-673-0501, 530-295-5505 or 209-223-0505.

NWFSC NOAA photo

<http://www.thelog.com/snw/sb-187-questions-abound-about-fishing-license-bills-failure/>