



PRESS RELEASE

Legislation Introduced to Increase Fishing Participation in California **Declining participation rate harming wildlife funding, outdoor tourism and jobs**

February 28, 2018 (Sacramento, CA): [Assemblyman James Gallagher](#) of Yuba City introduced Assembly [Bill 2465](#) which aims to increase fishing participation throughout the state by collaborating with the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to identify and remove barriers to sport fishing that have contributed to a significant decline in the state's participation rate and sport fishing license sales.

The California Sportfishing League, the state's leading advocate for recreational anglers, will serve as the bill's sponsor.

This bill establishes a panel of sportfishing leaders tasked with developing a strategic plan to **Retain, Recruit and Reactivate** angler participation, otherwise referred to as an "R3 Stakeholder Group." The goal of this group is to develop and approve recommendations for removal of those barriers, and submit to the Legislature a report containing the approved recommendations.

"California's fishing participation rate has declined to "dead last" in the Nation, and developing solutions that increase participation in outdoor recreation is long overdue," said Assemblymember James Gallagher. "Growing fishing participation is critical to the state and for communities that depend on recreational fishing for outdoor tourism and jobs."

Annual fishing license sales have declined over 55% since 1980, while the population has increased over 60%. This has had a considerable negative impact on funding for the DFW's conservation and hatchery programs. In 2017, the California Fish and Game Preservation Fund, funded by hunting and fishing licenses, experienced a \$20 million deficit. Absent an influx of new revenue, future deficits are projected for years to come.

"There is a growing recognition among wildlife agencies all over the country that new and innovative approaches are needed to make fishing more affordable and accessible," said Marko Mlikotin, executive director of the CSL. "Passage of this bill will introduce more Californians to the joy of fishing and the great outdoors."

When California has one of the costliest fishing licenses in the U.S., combined with increasing limitations on when and where one can fish, it comes as no surprise that California's fishing participation rate ranks dead-last in the U.S. (per capita). Consequently, annual license sales have declined over 55 percent since 1980, a time when annual licenses cost a mere \$5 a year.

Assemblymember James Gallagher is also the author of [AB 986](#), legislation that will establish a 12-month fishing license, and discount hunting and fishing licenses for California veterans.

The [California Sportfishing League](#) is a nonprofit coalition of recreational anglers, and small business owners devoted to protecting access to recreational fishing. Recreational fishing contributes over \$4.6 billion annually to California's economy, a major contributor to outdoor tourism and jobs.

To learn more visit www.savefishing.com or Twitter [@CASportfishing](#)

Contact: Marko Mlikotin
Marko@savefishing.com

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