



PRESS RELEASE

Asm. Jim Wood Introduces Bill to Make Recreational Fishing More Accessible Establishes a 365-Day Fishing License and Mobile Fishing App

February 25, 2019 (Sacramento, CA) – Today, Assemblymember Jim Wood (D-Santa Rosa) has authored Assembly Bill 1387, state legislation that will transition California’s calendar-based fishing license to one that is valid a full 365 days from the date of purchase and a mobile phone app that makes fishing easier and more accessible. The bill, sponsored by the California Sportfishing League (CSL), is co-authored by Assemblymember James Gallagher (R-Yuba City) and a bipartisan group of 12 other legislators.

Since 1980, annual resident sport fishing license sales have declined 55% while the state’s population has increased over 60%. While California has a population of more than 39.8 million people, one of the country’s longest coastlines, more than 3,000 lakes and thousands of rivers and streams, it has the lowest fishing participation rate per capita in the country.

A leading contributor to declining fishing participation rates is costly fishing licenses that are not valid a full 365 days from the date of purchase. California’s calendar-based fishing licenses expire on December 31st of each year, regardless of when purchased. Because most anglers will not pay full price for a license that is not valid a full 365 days from the date of purchase, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) fishing license data reveals that annual license sales peak in the first quarter of the year and then decline significantly by Spring, even as weather warms and outdoor activity increases.

Recognizing this marketing flaw, 14 states have transitioned to a 365-day license. According to [Rob Southwick and Associates](#), a national marketing and economics firm which analyses fishing license sales throughout the country, states that offer a 365-day license are outperforming revenue of states that only offer a calendar-based license.

“It’s time for California to abandon an antiquated fishing license that’s harming our participation rate,” said Wood. “Modernizing our fishing license to one that is valid a full 365 days from the date of purchase will encourage more Californians to fish and increase fishing license revenue that fund critical state fishing and conservation programs. Making fishing more accessible really supports communities that rely on outdoor recreation and tourism.”

[Wood](#) serves on the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks & Wildlife. He was elected in 2014 and represents Assembly District 2, a Northern California district including 300 miles of

coastline and many state parks, lakes, rivers and streams.

Key features of Assembly Bill 1387 (Wood):

- Replaces California’s current calendar-based system for a fishing license that is valid a full 12 months (365 days) from the date of purchase. There will be no increase in the fee charged for the 365-day license (same as calendar license).
- Requires the CDFW to create an app where anglers can display sport fishing and hunting licenses on mobile devices. Several states offer [mobile phone apps](#) that provide anglers information on fishing locations, regulations, fish stocking schedules, campground reservations and more.
- Allows anglers to sign up for automatic license renewals. [Florida implemented an auto-renewal system](#) in 2015, increasing renewal rates by about 4%.
- The 365-day license will go into effect on January 1, 2021, after CDFW updates its Automated License Data System, therefore saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars by not requiring software redesign.

“The calendar-based license deters many Californians from purchasing licenses later in a calendar year,” said Wood. “While this legislation does not reduce license fees, it does provide anglers greater value and the convenience of technology that improves their fishing experience.”

In 2018, Southwick and Associates released a study entitled [“Considerations Regarding 365-Day Fishing Licenses”](#) that evaluated California’s current fishing license structure and the potential benefits of a 365-day license. It concluded that in order to maintain adequate conservation funding, changes are needed to the State’s sport fishing license structure, pricing and/or marketing approaches.

“The bill’s bipartisan support underscores the recognition by members of the State Legislature that California’s outdated sport fishing license system does not serve current or future anglers as well as it should,” said Marko Mlikotin, executive director of the CSL (bill sponsor). “Providing anglers access to a fishing license that provides greater value and technology that makes fishing more accessible is long overdue.”

California’s sport fishing license remains among the costliest in the country, second only to the State of Washington. Since 1986, the price of California’s resident annual fishing license has increased 216%, which is 41% greater than the rate of inflation. Today, the license costs 110% over the national average.

The **California Sportfishing League** (CSL) is a nonprofit coalition of recreational anglers, and small business owners devoted to protecting access to recreational fishing. California's 2.6 million recreational anglers contribute 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](https://twitter.com/CASportfishing)

Contact: Marko Mlikotin
Marko@savefishing.com

###