



PRESS RELEASE

California's Plan to Bolster Fishing and Hunting Calls for 365-Day License Proposes that licensing authority shift from State Legislature to Fish and Game Commission

March 6, 2020 (Sacramento, CA) – Last week, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) publicly released its long awaited final "[Statewide R3 Implementation Strategy](#)." The Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) of hunters and anglers is a nationwide movement focused on reversing the decline in hunting, fishing and shooting sports participation.

As an organization involved in developing the plan, the California Sportfishing League (CSL) is pleased with the department's recognition that the state's costly and antiquated license program needs to be overhauled and a 365-day fishing license with auto-renewal features is part of the solution.

"California anglers could not be more pleased that the Department of Fish and Wildlife has unveiled an R3 Plan that recommends a 365-day fishing license," said Marko Mlikotin, executive director of the CSL. "This achievement sends a strong signal to the California State Legislature that there is a real plan to reform the state's antiquated and costly licensing program, and this was accomplished with the hard work of many fine hunting and angler organizations. Finally, there is a real plan to make the great outdoors even more accessible to future generations of Californians."

DFW's recommendation bolsters the likelihood that Assembly Bill 1387 will reach Governor Gavin Newsom's desk for signature. Assemblymember Jim Wood (D-Santa Rosa) is the author of Assembly Bill 1387 which advances many of DFW's fishing recommendations. CSL is the sponsor of the legislation which passed the State Assembly unanimously in 2019 and currently rests in the State Senate.

"Reforming California's antiquated licensing program will make California an even more inviting place for outdoor tourism, boosting local economic activity," said Wood. "This bill just makes common sense – after all, drivers licenses and car registration are all 365-day licenses. And as we increase licensing revenue, more can go to protecting our state's fisheries and wildlife."

Among the R3 recommendations is a proposal to shift the responsibility of setting license fees and structure from the State Legislature to the California Fish and Game Commission. This move could improve license marketing and rational price setting, which will increase fishing license sales. Today, license fees are determined by the Legislature and a cost-of-living formula

that increases prices nearly every year without any consideration to market conditions. As a consequence, California's sport fishing license remains among the costliest in the country with permits. 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 annual license costs 110% over the national average.

BACKGROUND

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, CDFW fishing license data reveals that annual license sales peak in the first quarter of the year and then decline significantly by late 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.

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)

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