



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **California Anglers Call for Reforms to Increase Participation Rates & Access Time to cut bait on state's costly and antiquated fishing license program**

March 6, 2017 (Sacramento, CA): Today, California's leading advocate for sportfishing released its state legislative agenda for 2017-18. The bills sponsored and supported by the California Sportfishing League (CSL) aim to address an alarming decline in fishing participation rates and license sales, and to protect sportfishing's \$4.6 billion annual contribution to California communities dependent on outdoor tourism and jobs.

"California's costly and antiquated fishing license program is a contributing factor to an alarming decline in fishing participation rates," said Marko Mlikotin, executive director of the CSL. "When California's economy and jobs are threatened by a fishing license system that consumers find too costly for its limited value, reforms are desperately needed to attract more outdoor enthusiasts to the joy of fishing."

According to a 2015 study conducted by the CSL, California's annual fishing license is the costliest in the United States (w/permits), and sales of the state's annual fishing licenses have declined over 55% since 1980, while California's population increased over 60% during the same period. When compared to other states with a calendar-based system, California's annual license is 84% more expensive. A contributing factor to declining sales is that the state's annual license is not valid a full 12-months from the date of purchase, like the state's annual park pass. Annual fishing licenses expire December 31<sup>st</sup> of every year, providing little value to anglers who purchase their license later in the year.

"Senator Berryhill and Assembly Member Gallagher have introduced common sense legislation that will protect recreational fishing, and communities dependent on outdoor tourism for tax revenue and jobs," said Mlikotin.

#### **Sponsored by CSL:**

##### **SB 187 (Berryhill) 12-Month Fishing License**

This legislation aims to increase fishing participation rates, license sales and state revenue by making annual fishing license sales valid for a full 12-months from the date of purchase. This provision is also included in AB 986, introduced by Assembly Member Gallagher.

##### **SB 234 (Berryhill) Protecting Local Fishing Rights**

Under existing law, a city or county, or local public agency, has no authority to regulate fish and game except that a city or county may adopt an ordinance that incidentally affects fishing and hunting for the protection of public health and safety. In order to prevent local

agencies from continuing to pass illegal fishing restrictions or bans, Senate Bill 234 is declaratory of existing law and codifies regulatory authority in the Fish and Game Commission. Additionally, the bill requires the court to grant damages to the prevailing party in an action and allows the court to award punitive damages.

## **Supported by CSL**

### **AB 478 (Waldron) Free Fishing Up to 18**

Under existing law, anglers are not required to obtain a fishing license until the age of 16. This bill increases the eligibility to fish for free to 18 years of age. Given that over 70 percent of anglers learned to fish during their youth, making fishing more affordable could increase future fishing participation rates and increase future fishing license sales.

### **AB 986 (Gallagher) 12-Month Fishing License/Veterans Discount**

This legislation aims to increase fishing license sales and revenue by making annual fishing license sales valid for a full 12-months from the date of purchase. This bill also discounts annual fishing license for American veterans by 25%, and by 50% for veterans that have a 50% or greater service-connected disability.

### **AB 1337 (Patterson/Cooley) Government Transparency/Fish and Game Commission**

This bill will ensure greater government transparency by requiring the commission to provide a live video broadcast on its website of every commission and subcommittee meeting that is open to the public.

### **SB 144 (McGuire/Nielsen) Conservation**

A steelhead report card is required of anglers taking steelhead trout. Monies from the sale of the cards is used by the Department of Fish and Wildlife to monitor take and to fund steelhead conservation programs. SB 144 extends this program through January 1, 2023.

### **SB 161 (McGuire) California Fish and Game Commission**

This bill requires the Fish and Game Commission to form a tribal committee from its membership consisting of at least one commissioner and would require the committee to report to the commission from time to time on its activities, and to make recommendations on all tribal matters considered by the commission.

The California Sportfishing League (CSL) is a nonprofit coalition of fresh and saltwater anglers, and businesses devoted to protecting access to recreational fishing. California's 2,795,253 million anglers generate \$4.6 billion in economic activity annually, supporting local tourism and jobs.