



PRESS RELEASE

Business and Tourism Coalition Support Fishing License Bill First Hearing on Landmark Legislation Set for April 28 at California State Capitol

April 22, 2015 (Sacramento, CA): Today, California's leading advocate for recreational anglers released an impressive coalition of business and tourism organizations in support of fishing license legislation that aims to protect California jobs and tourism.

Recreational fishing in California generates over \$4.9 billion in economic activity each year, supporting communities dependent on outdoor recreation and tourism for jobs, and tax revenue. However, fishing's economic impact is threatened by an unprecedented decline in participation that is due, in part, to one of the costliest annual fishing licenses in the Nation not being valid for a full year from the date of purchase.

"California employers recognize that California's fishing license program is too costly and antiquated, and harming the economy," said Marko Mlikotin, executive director for the California Sportfishing League (CSL). "California needs to abandon its existing licensing program and remove barriers to participation by making recreational fishing more affordable. In doing so, jobs will be created and communities will grow stronger."

Given the importance of the *Sportfishing Stimulus Act of 2015* (SB 345; Berryhill, R-Twain Harte), the business and angling community is encouraged to write support letters and attend the bill's first hearing.

When: April 28, 2015, 9:30am
Where: Room 112, State Capitol, Sacramento
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water

"We encourage California anglers to write letters and attend this important hearing," said Mlikotin. "Anglers have a voice in the political process and need to be heard."

Partial List of Supporters: California Chamber of Commerce, National Federation of Independent Business, National Marine Manufacturers Association, Cal Travel Association, California Hotel and Lodging Association, California Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds, California Association of Boutique & Breakfast Inns, California Yacht Brokers, Marina Recreation Association, Worldwide Boater Safety Association, California Parks Hospitality Association, California Sportfishing League, California Aquaculture Association, CA Association for Recreational Fishing, Pure Fishing, Turner's Outdoorsman, and the Los Angeles Rod and Reel Club.

The *California Sport Fishing Stimulus Act* of 2015 (SB 345), is sponsored by the California Sportfishing League, and authored by Senator Tom Berryhill of Twain Harte and Assembly Member Frank Bigelow of O'Neals.

SB 345 introduces several reforms aimed at reversing California's unprecedented decline in fishing participation:

- Establishes an annual fishing license valid for a full 12 months, from the date of purchase. Current licenses expire at the end of the calendar year.
- Establishes a junior fishing license at a reduced base price of \$8.25 for 16 and 17 year olds (not including special permits), similar to the state's junior hunting license. Those under 16 would still be able to fish for free.
- Exempts bona fide charitable organizations from possession limit
 - This would allow recreational anglers to donate fish to a bona fide charitable organization without the threat of the charitable organization being over the state-mandated possession limit. For example, if anglers wanted to donate their catch to their non-profit fishing club for use at a fundraiser, the organization would be exempt from possession limits as long as the organization collected specified information from anglers

To learn more about the Sportfishing Stimulus Act, please see the bill's [Fact Sheet](#).

Key Fishing Facts

On March 23, 2015, CSL [released a study](#) that found that the high cost of purchasing an annual recreational fishing license has proven to be a formidable barrier to access and has contributed to an unprecedented decline in recreational fishing.

Economic Value

- There are roughly 1.7 million recreational anglers in California, contributing over \$4.9 billion annually in economic activity. In comparison to commercial fishing, which provides roughly \$1.7 billion in annual economic benefits, recreational fishing is a major source of outdoor tourism, jobs and tax revenue for all 58 counties.

Unprecedented Decline in Participation

- California's fishing participation rate is ranked dead last in the United States despite having one of the longest coastlines in the U.S., over 4,000 lakes/reservoirs and thousands of rivers and streams.
- Since 1980, when annual licenses were sold for as little as \$5.00, California's annual fishing license sales have dropped by more than 55% ([1980](#): 2.26 million; [2014](#): 990k), while the state's population has increased by nearly 60%. In 2014, 40,000 fewer annual fishing licenses were sold compared to 2013.

- If the 35-year trend remains constant, annual fishing license sales could fall below 500,000 by 2027, or another 49% over the next 12 years. Should this occur, between 1980 and 2027, annual license sales will have dropped 78%. This downward trend could accelerate if fees are increased substantially, or new regulations are imposed that increase costs or barriers to fishing.

Antiquated Licensing System

- California operates under an antiquated calendar system, whereby licenses expire on December 31st of every year, regardless of when purchased. This system discourages anglers from purchasing a license that is not valid a full 12 months.
- California does not provide a junior fishing license. According to the American Sportfishing Association, 71% of anglers first started fishing when they were under 18 years of age, underscoring the importance of removing costly barriers to entry for young anglers.

Too Costly to Fish in California

- California offers the 2nd highest fresh/saltwater annual fishing license in the U.S. What once sold for \$5 in 1980, costs \$47.01 today, not including permits that could increase the cost to more than \$120 a year.
- California's "annual" base residential license of \$47.01 is 66% above the average fishing license cost of all coastal states (\$28.30) and 76% above the average fishing license cost for all states (\$26.73), not including additional permits.

Founded in 2014, the California Sportfishing League (CSL) is a nonprofit coalition of fresh and saltwater anglers, and small business owners devoted to protecting access to recreational fishing. To learn more visit www.SportfishingConservation.org or [@CASportfishing](https://www.facebook.com/CASportfishing), or LIKE on [facebook.com/CASportfishingLeague](https://www.facebook.com/CASportfishingLeague)

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