



# Fishing license reform bill goes to committee

April 3, 2019

On March 27, the California Sportfishing League announced that Assembly member Jim Wood's Assembly Bill 1387, legislation that will create a 365-day fishing license, will be heard by the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife on Tuesday, April 9, and that the bill is supported by an impressive coalition of state and local organizations representing sportfishing, small business, local government, travel, hospitality, marinas and fishing tackle and boat manufacturers.

The bill's broad-based support underscores the realization that declining fishing license sales threaten recreational fishing's \$4.6 billion annual economic contribution to California communities dependent on outdoor tourism and recreation for jobs and tax revenue.

"California's costly and antiquated fishing license program is a major contributor to an alarming decline in California's fishing participation rate," said Marko Mlikotin, executive director of the CSL. "Assembly member Wood's legislation offers a real solution that will increase fishing participation rates and license sales that fund state fishing and conservation programs."

More than 4,500 anglers have signed an online petition. Other Californians wishing to do so too are encouraged to visit [www.savefishing.com](http://www.savefishing.com).

Key features of AB 1387 include:

- ▶ 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 percent.

▶ The 365-day license will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2021, after CDFW updates its Automated License Data System, therefore saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars by not requiring software redesign.

Since 1980, annual resident sport fishing license sales have declined 55 percent while the state's population has increased over 60 percent. 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, proponents say, 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 Dec. 31 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 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.

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