



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Business, Travel Industry & Labor Support Fishing License Reforms Los Angeles County's Status as Recreational Fishing Leader Threatened by Declining Participation Rates**

May 23, 2017 (Sacramento, CA): Today, California's leading advocate for sportfishing announced that fishing license reforms that will protect sportfishing's \$4.6 billion annual economic contribution to California communities dependent on outdoor tourism and jobs are within reach - at a time when annual fishing licenses have declined over 55% since 1980.

"Los Angeles area communities are dependent on recreational fishing for tourism and jobs," said Tracy Hernandez, BizFed Founding CEO. "Costly fishing licenses and unwarranted fishing restrictions are taking a toll on recreational fishing's economic impact. It's time for Los Angeles area legislators to assume a leadership role in protecting recreational fishing's economic contribution to our community."

Senator Ricardo Lara of Los Angeles County, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, is strongly positioned to advance Senate Bill 187, authored by Senator Tom Berryhill of Twain Harte. **The fate of the bill will be revealed Thursday, May 25th. A similar bill did not pass out of the committee in 2015.**

"This bill would improve the quality of life for Californians -- from anglers who love the sport to people just trying to feed their families," said Senator Tom Berryhill, author of SB 187. "Labor unions, state and local chambers of commerce, anglers, tourism groups and everyday Californians all agree this is the right move for California."

**Reforms take on added importance for Los Angeles County, a county that has more licensed anglers (over 290,000) than any other California county and 17 states.**

"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, a statewide sportfishing organization sponsoring SB 187. "When California's economy and jobs are threatened by a fishing license system that consumers find too costly, reforms are desperately needed to attract more outdoor enthusiasts to the joy of fishing."

Senate Bill 187 is also supported by nearly every statewide organization or industry representing business, labor, local government, travel, hospitality, marinas and boating industry, including the California Travel Association and California Chamber of Commerce. For a complete list of supporters, [click here](#).

In letters to Senator Lara, the International Union of Operating Engineers and SEIU Local 1000, who represent the rank and file Department of Fish and Wildlife employees, agree that a 12-month fishing license will sell more licenses and bring in more revenue – not less revenue – to the DFW.

“Anglers from all over the world fish from our marinas,” said Kevin Ketchum, immediate past president of the Marine Recreation Association, and principal/general manager of California Yacht Marina which operates 5 ocean marinas in Southern California. “Fishing is a significant activity for boaters berthing in SoCal Harbors, and if the state is interested in supporting recreational boating and the cultural and economic benefits they bring, removing costly barriers to fishing is needed to help grow fishing participation rates.”

**Background:** Despite all its natural resources and size, California’s fishing participation rate has declined to dead last (per capita) in the United States. Furthermore, according to a [2015 study conducted by the CSL](#), California’s annual fishing license is the costliest in the United States (w/permits). Sales of the state’s annual fishing licenses have declined over 55% since 1980, during which time California’s population increased over 60%. When compared to other states, California’s annual license is 76% more expensive. Another 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. Today, 11 states and Mexico offer a 12-month fishing license.

The State of Texas implemented a 12-month license program in 2005, and over the past five years (2012-16), they experienced 11.8% increase in sales and a 12.58% increase in revenue (or \$1.9 million). Maryland has experienced a 4% increase since their transition in October 2015.

### **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.

**Status:** Passed on April 25, 2017, [Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee](#). May 15<sup>th</sup>, [Senate Appropriations Committee](#), placed on suspense file.

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.

BizFed, a grassroots alliance of 163 business associations representing 325,000 employers with over 3 million employees in LA County.

[www.savefishing.com](http://www.savefishing.com) or [@Savefishing](https://twitter.com/Savefishing) on Twitter