



PRESS RELEASE

Anglers, Business, Travel Industry and Public Employee Unions Support Legislation that Reforms California's Failed Fishing License Program Declining Participation Rates and Sales Threaten Economy and Jobs

May 23, 2017 (Sacramento, CA): Today, California's leading advocate for sportfishing announced that fishing license reforms that 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.

"Recreational fishing generates billions of dollars annually in economic activity for our state and communities dependent on outdoor recreation for jobs and tax revenue," said Barb Newton, President and CEO of the California Travel Association. "Making fishing less expensive and more accessible is not only critical to increasing participation rates, but protecting our state's tourism industry."

The fate of several state fishing license bills that aim to increase fishing participation rates and license sales will be determined this week.

The Senate Appropriations Committee will reveal the fate of SB 187 (Berryhill) Thursday, May 25th. The Assembly Appropriations Committee will rule on AB 468 (Waldron) and AB 986 (Gallagher) on Friday, May 26th. If they pass committee, they will come to the floor of their respective chambers.

The bills are supported by nearly every statewide organization or industry representing business, public employee unions, local government, travel, hospitality, marinas and boat manufacturers. For a complete list of supporters, [click here](#).

Even 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.

"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. "As fishing license sales face a death spiral, fishing's economic contribution will continue to decline, as will revenue for state conservation and fishery programs."

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 31st 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 experienced similar success.

[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. Today, California has an antiquated licensing system whereby annual fishing licenses expire on December 31st of every year, regardless of when it was purchased. This provision is also included in AB 986, introduced by Assembly Member Gallagher.

[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. Today, California has an antiquated licensing system whereby annual fishing licenses expire on December 31st of every year, regardless of when it was purchased. SB 187, introduced by Senator Tom Berryhill, also includes a 12-month provision. 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.

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.

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