



## Sportfishing license bill progresses through legislature

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Members of the State Senate's Natural Resources and Water Committee unanimously voted in favor of Senate Bill 187 (SB 187), the proposal adjusting the way California issues sportfishing licenses to anglers, during an April 25 hearing.

State Sen. Tom Berryhill, R-Twain Harte, introduced SB 187 earlier this year; the bill would eliminate California's practice of issuing sportfishing licenses on a calendar-year system and instead allow anglers to maintain active fishing permits for 12 months after the purchase date.

"Currently, fishing licenses are based on a calendar-year cycle, with no extra time or prorated rates given for purchases made later in the season," Berryhill's staff said in a released statement about the sportfishing licenses bill. "SB 187, which is supported by groups representing nearly every type of Californian, would make fishing licenses valid for 12 months from the time of the purchase.

A legislative analysis stated sportfishing participation in California has declined steadily during the past 40 years.

"In the 1970s and into the early 1980s, resident annual sportfishing license sales averaged about ... 2.2 million. By 1990, sales were reduced to about 1.5 million," the Natural Resources and Water Committee staff stated in its legislative analysis. "From 2000 [to] 2010 approximately ... 1.2 million licenses were sold annually. The sportfishing license sales have declined despite increasing population over the time period."

There are 11 states currently offering 12-month sportfishing licenses: Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Utah and Virginia.

"According to the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee analysis for SB 583 (2013), some of the states that switched from calendar year to 12 consecutive month annual sport fishing licenses experienced a decline in sportfishing license revenues at least in part attributable to the change. Some states have increased revenues," the legislative analysis of SB 187 stated.

Alabama experimented with a 12-month sportfishing license and reverted back to a calendar-year system.

SB 187 will continue through the legislative process, with future votes to be reported by *FishRap*.

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