



Fishing license reform bill earns State Senate support

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SACRAMENTO — It is said June Gloom follows May Gray. However anglers across California are probably feeling anything but gloomy on June 1, thanks to the State Senate's approval of a proposal to require fishing licenses remain valid for a full 12 months.

State Senators unanimously approved Senate Bill 187 (SB 187) late May 31, opening the door for the legislation to be deliberated in the Assembly. SB 187, if approved by the Assembly and signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown, would do away with California's practice of selling calendar-based fishing licenses.

Currently the state only issues fishing licenses through Dec. 31 of a given year. Anglers pay the same fee for the license regardless of when purchased.

The proposed fishing license system, which was introduced by State Sen. Tom Berryhill, would allow anglers to purchase the necessary permit for a full 12 months, regardless of when it was purchased.

Fishing advocacy groups have long stated a 12-month fishing license system would spur angling activity in California.

Berryhill introduced a similar bill in the State Senate in 2015; the proposal was gutted just ahead of its scheduled vote in the upper house.

His second attempt, so far, was more successful.

Marko Mlikotin, executive director of California Sportfishing League, said the current fishing license system has been costly for anglers and contributed to diminished angling participation in the state.

"California's costly and antiquated fishing license program is a contributing factor to an alarming decline in fishing participation rates," Mlikotin stated. "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."

SB 187 now moves to the Assembly for consideration. A successful vote in the lower house would take the bill to Brown's desk for signature.

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