



PRESS RELEASE

California State Senate Unanimously Passes Fishing License Reform Bill Declining Participation Rates and Sales Threaten State's Economy and Jobs

June 1, 2017 (Sacramento, CA): Last night, the California State Senate unanimously passed [Senate Bill 187, authored by Senator Tom Berryhill](#), state legislation that will transition California's calendar-based fishing license to one that is valid a full 12-months from the date of purchase. In 2015, similar legislation failed to reach the Senate floor.

"This bill would not only improve access to recreational fishing, it will protect California jobs dependent on outdoor tourism," said Senator Tom Berryhill, author of SB 187. "Labor unions, state and local chambers of commerce, anglers, tourism groups and everyday Californians recognize that California's antiquated fishing licensing program has proven to be a barrier to participation."

Based on the success of other states, the bill sponsored by the California Sportfishing League (CSL) aims to address California's costly and failing fishing license program by increasing fishing participation rates and license sales.

"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. "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."

The legislation is also supported by an [impressive coalition](#) of state and local organizations representing small business, labor, local government, travel, hospitality, marinas and boat manufacturers. The coalition recognizes that an unprecedented decline in fishing license sales threatens recreational fishing's \$4.6 billion annual economic contribution to California communities dependent on outdoor tourism, jobs and tax revenue.

"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."

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.

Before reaching the Governor's desk, SB 187 must pass the State Assembly.

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](#). Calendar-based fishing licenses expire on December 31st of every year, providing little to no incentive for anglers to purchase a license late 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 an 11.8% increase in sales and a 12.58% increase in revenue (or \$1.9 million). Maryland experienced similar success.

Fishery and conservation programs are also at risk as fishing license sales fuel the Fish and Game Preservation Fund, which is facing an unprecedented \$20 million deficit. This deficit will only grow as federal funding, assessed by the number of licenses sold, is reduced as annual license sales continue to decline.

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.