



## PRESS RELEASE

# Senate Bill 187 Battles Major Legislative Hurdles

## Reform for California's failed Fishing License Program

July 19, 2017 (Sacramento, CA): Today, California anglers announced that legislation that aims to reform California's costly and antiquated fishing license process is closer to becoming law.

The Assembly Appropriations Committee, chaired by Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher (D-San Diego) placed Senate Bill 187, authored by Senator Tom Berryhill (R-Twain Harte) on the Appropriations suspense file. If the bill becomes law, California's calendar based system will transition to a license that is valid for a full 12-months from the date of purchase.

"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. "When California's economy and jobs are threatened by a fishing license system that consumers find too costly for its limited value, reforms are desperately needed to attract more outdoor enthusiasts to the joy of fishing."

This transition from the calendar-based system to the 12-month license is important to increase sales and fishing participation. It allows California to maintain funding for conservation and fish stocking programs, while improving recreational fishing and protecting the California jobs that are dependent on outdoor tourism.

The bill passed the State Senate unanimously. Now, if the bill comes off the suspense file (Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>), clears the Assembly and is signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown, California anglers will be able to obtain an annual fishing license that is valid for a full 12-months from the date of purchase. This new license system would provide incentive for anglers to fish, which in return protects the jobs dependent on them.

**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 31<sup>st</sup> of every year, providing little to no incentive for anglers

to purchase a license late in the year. Today, 12 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.

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