



## **Editorial: CA Fishing License Sales Still Plummeting**

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The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) has done nothing in decades to try and increase the downward spiral of fishing license sales in California, and with directors who don't seem to care, there is no pressure from the top to change that.

The California Sportfishing League (CSL) released independent analysis that reveals that California's costly fishing license is likely a major contributor to the state's declining fishing participation rate and is economically unsustainable for the DFW.

The study from Southwick Associates determined that 12-month fishing states have experienced greater growth in sales and revenue. This is timely, given the 12-month fishing license legislation pending in the California State Legislature.

Calendar-based licenses expire on Dec. 31 of each year, and California anglers have long complained that there are few incentives for them to purchase an annual license during the spring and summer months when outdoor activity increases, especially one that costs 110% over the national average.

Findings from the study are shocking: There are 1 million fewer anglers in California than in 1985 due to high costs, a calendar-based license term and lack of opportunity. States that have adopted a 12-month license have seen significantly higher revenue, and through R3 (Recruit, Retain and Re-activate) programs, something California has not adopted.

Increased license fees are not the answer, since a California fishing license is already far over-priced, and lowering the cost would actually boost revenue with more anglers purchasing licenses. It's simple, but apparently beyond the understanding of the current DFW leaders.

The California State Legislature is considering two bills that would transition California from a calendar-based license to a 12-month

license; Senate Bill 518 (formerly SB 187) authored by Senator Tom Berryhill and Assembly Bill 986, authored by Assemblyman James Gallagher. Both bills will be considered in the week of Monday, June 25th. They enjoy broad based support from organizations representing sportfishing, recreational boating, marina operators, small business, retail, and the tourism and hospitality industry.

We are in full support of 12-month license and urge our readers to comment to their legislators in favor of passing a bill that would reflect that.

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