



August 20, 2018

The Honorable Tom Berryhill
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJ: Senate Bill 518 (Berryhill) Sport fishing Licenses: 12 consecutive month licenses
POSITION: Oppose, unless amended, removing support

Dear Senator Berryhill:

We sincerely regret having to revise our position on SB 518 after the significant resources both you and the California Sportfishing League have invested in increasing sport fishing participation in California. Our reasons for so doing are explained below.

As you well know, the sales of California annual sport fishing licenses have declined over 55% since 1980, and 16% during the Brown Administration of the past 8 years. Experts in the economics and marketing of sport fishing licenses attribute the decline, in large part, to the high cost of sport fishing licenses in California. The base price of California's calendar-based license is the second most expensive license in the country. Once required permits are purchased, California has the distinction of being the most expensive state to fish in the country.

In order to address declining sales and fishing participation rates, the solution was simple: abandon a costly and antiquated calendar-year license for a 12-month fishing license that is valid a full 365 days from the date of purchase. Most states that made this transition experienced greater sales and revenue than calendar-based states.

Notwithstanding opposition from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), the California Sportfishing League has sponsored several 12-month license bills, including Senate Bill 518 (formerly SB 187). However, we did take exception to amending the bill to charge more for the 12-month license (130% of the price of the calendar year license) than the calendar year license. When the high cost of fishing is a leading contributor to declining sales, increasing the price of a failing product is contrary to the advice of marketing experts and common sense.

Unfortunately, SB 518 passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee with this costly provision intact, despite our best efforts to amend the bill. I am certain that had DFW removed their opposition to a 12-month license, the outcome could have been very different.

Now, it is our request that the bill be amended, as detailed below, on the Assembly Floor before moving to the State Senate:

1) Reduce the cost of the 12-month license to the same price charged for a calendar-based license and,

2) In order to avoid additional costs associated with updating the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Automated License Data System, delay the implementation of SB 518 to January 1 2021.

And lastly, we urge retention of the auto renewal license feature, which will help stimulate timely license renewals in California, as it has in other states.

California's angling community owes you a great debt of gratitude for championing the need to reform California's costly and antiquated fishing license program. Unfortunately, as drafted, SB 518 will be counterproductive to our shared objective of increasing sport fishing participation in California.

It is with much regret that the California Sportfishing League (CSL) withdraws support for SB 518, and now takes the position of "Oppose, unless amended."

Thank you for considering our views on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marko Mlikotin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marko Mlikotin
Executive Director

cc: Members, California State Assembly
Charleton H. Bonham, Director, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Fish and Game Commission
The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr., Governor of California