



PRESS RELEASE

California Legislature Fails to Reform State's Failing Fishing License Program, Again Costly Provision to Increase Fishing License Fees Dooms Legislation

August 31, 2018 (Sacramento, CA): For two consecutive legislative sessions, the California State Legislature has failed to pass meaningful fishing license reforms that would address California's declining fishing participation rate, and declining fishing license sales and revenue.

After the State Legislature amended Senate Bill 518 (Berryhill) to increase the cost of the bill's proposed 12-month fishing license, the California Sportfishing League [withdrew support for the bill](#) and Senator Tom Berryhill chose not to advance the bill.

The CSL has sponsored several 12-month license bills, including Senate Bill 518 (formerly SB 187), but opposed charging more for a 12-month license. As if intended to be a poison pill, the legislature amended the bill to charge a premium for the 12-month license that was 30% more than the cost of the current calendar-based fishing license.

"When the high cost of fishing is a leading contributor to declining sales, making fishing even more expensive is contrary to the advice of marketing experts and common sense," said Marko Mlikotin, Executive Director of the CSL. "It is for this reason recreational anglers could no longer support Senate Bill 518."

California's annual calendar-based fishing license expires on December 31st of every year, providing few incentives for anglers to pay full-price for a license in the Spring and Summer months when recreational activity increases.

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

The sales of California's annual sport fishing licenses have declined over 55% since 1980, and 16% during the past eight years of the Brown Administration. 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.

Earlier this year CSL released independent analysis conducted by [Southwick & Associates](#) that revealed 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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

“California anglers owe Senator Tom Berryhill a great debt of gratitude,” said Mlikotin. “Senator Berryhill was among the first to recognize that the state’s costly fishing license was a significant barrier for prospective anglers, and the state’s failure to reform its license program was harming communities dependent on outdoor tourism for jobs.”

Senator Tom Berrybill (R-Twain Harte) is retiring after 12 years of service in the California State Legislature.

Senate Bill 518 was [supported by a strong coalition group](#) of industries and organizations representing sportfishing, boaters, marina operators, small business, retailers, tourism and hospitality.

The California Sportfishing League (CSL) is a nonprofit coalition of recreational anglers, and small business owners devoted to protecting access to recreational fishing. Recreational fishing contributes over \$4.6 billion annually to California’s economy, a major contributor to outdoor tourism and jobs.

To learn more visit www.savefishing.com or Twitter [@CASportfishing](https://twitter.com/CASportfishing)

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