

## **Big Bear Grizzly - Common sense bill should be law**

### **Our Point of View**

Sep 20, 2017

California lawmakers' attempt to reform the state's fishing license system has been put on hold. Earlier this month Senate Bill 187, which was sponsored by the California Sportfishing League, died in committee in the State Assembly. The State Senate had already unanimously passed the bill.

Why does this matter to a place like Big Bear Lake? With fishing an important part of the summer tourist economy, improving the fishing license system is a no brainer. The bill advocated changing the rules to make fishing more affordable and accessible by creating a 12-month fishing license that expires 12 months from the time of purchase. Under current law, no matter when a fishing license is purchased during the year, it expires Dec. 31.

Senate Bill 187 aimed to increase fishing population rates, license sales and state revenue by changing license sales. It was also seen as a way to help bring back those anglers who stopped fishing because of the cost.

The State Assembly committee is chaired by Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher of San Diego. The committee did not vote on the bill, so it died without moving to the full assembly. The bill was supported by several statewide organizations representing business, labor, travel, hospitality, local government and outdoor recreation.

A California Sportfishing League study shows that fishing license sales in the state of California have decreased more than 56 percent since 1980 while the state's population increased more than 60 percent during the same period. That means less revenue for California Department of Fish and Wildlife's fish and game preservation fund. In 2017, the fund is running a \$20 million deficit, partially as a result of those declining fishing license sales.

So why did Senate Bill 187 fail? It's not clear to us. What is clear is this legislation is long overdue. It makes more sense when 12-month fishing licenses actually expire at the end of 12 months. The current fishing license system is just not good

business. Imagine if your driver's license or motor vehicle registration was on the same schedule as fishing licenses.

Fortunately for state anglers, legislation sponsored by State Assemblyman James Gallagher also makes the state fishing license valid for a full 12 months from the date of purchase. Assembly Bill 986 is going through the lawmaking process in the state legislature at this very moment. It could be acted upon — or it could die — as soon as January 2018. The state legislature needs to do the right thing and change the fishing license system to make it better and affordable. Or is that asking too much?

Here in Big Bear, an improved fishing license program could mean more anglers in town dropping their lines in Big Bear Lake, staying in our hotels and eating in our restaurants. This is a vital piece of legislation that is good for our economy.

Those who favor changing the fishing license system should write, email or call their state representatives to let them know how important this is for Big Bear and other communities that rely on fishing as a major part of their economy.

[http://www.bigbeargrizzly.net/opinion/editorials/common-sense-bill-should-be-law/article\\_2387a34a-9d95-11e7-b085-fba978b62d05.html](http://www.bigbeargrizzly.net/opinion/editorials/common-sense-bill-should-be-law/article_2387a34a-9d95-11e7-b085-fba978b62d05.html)