



April 19, 2018

Senator Tom Berryhill
State Capitol, Room 3067
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: S.B. 518

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Berryhill:

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 518. Currently, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) issues recreational fishing licenses that expire at the end of each calendar year. S.B. 518, which would mandate that fishing licenses are valid for a full year after the date of purchase, is a promising step towards better serving California's 2.6 million anglers, and maintaining the Golden State's rich heritage of outdoor recreation.

Since 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation has maintained a singleness of purpose that has guided the organization to become the most respected and trusted sportsmen's organization in the political arena. CSF's mission is to work with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping. As a national organization working across the country, we are familiar with the various approaches that states use to recruit, retain and reactive anglers.

The number of fishing licenses sold in California each year has fallen dramatically over the last three decades. In 1986, when California had just 27 million residents, the state sold 1.7 million resident fishing licenses. Last year, despite an additional 12 million residents, CDFW sold just over one million licenses – a decline of almost 40%. The decline in the number of Californians who fish poses an ever-increasing threat to fisheries and aquatic resource conservation and management. Through the American System of Conservation Funding, sales of fishing licenses, in addition to excise taxes on fishing equipment and boat fuel directly fund conservation across the state. Last year alone, California's anglers contributed over \$82 million to conservation efforts in California through this system. Annually, angler expenditures generate over \$2.4 billion for the state economy and support over 35,000 jobs.

As the number of anglers in California has fallen, the price of a resident fishing license has increased from \$5 in 1980 to \$48.34 today – making it one of the most expensive fishing licenses in the country. Under California's current system, an angler who buys a license in October is charged the same amount as an angler who buys one at the beginning of the year, despite being able to use it for a scant 3 months. By transitioning to a fishing license that's valid for 12 months from the date of purchase, S.B. 518 would give California anglers greater value for their investment and encourage continued and increased angler participation.

Critics of annual licenses have suggested that this system will result in an unacceptable loss of revenue for CDFW. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this is the case. Fish and wildlife management agencies across the country - including in western states such as Arizona and Utah - have successfully transitioned to 365-day fishing licenses with great success. Agencies that have made the transition have reported higher customer satisfaction and no discernable declines in revenue.

For these reasons, we are pleased to support SB 518.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Soren Nelson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Soren Nelson
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