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BY MARKO MLIKOTIN/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION FOR RECREATIONAL FISHING

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Perspective

Would you pay \$41.50 for a half-day fishing trip to Catalina Island, while your buddy pays the same price for a full-day trip?

No way. But, crazy as it sounds, that's how the fishing license fee structure operates in California.

In our fine State there is no difference in cost for an annual license purchased at the beginning of the year, or near the end of the calendar year, with all so-called annual licenses expiring on the same day each year, Jan. 1.

The obvious consequence of this arcane system is that it creates a disincentive for anglers to purchase an annual license later in the year, and to purchase one- or two-day licenses instead, if at all.

In many cases, a licensing system that offers some anglers greater benefits than others has led many to stop fishing altogether, especially those on limited incomes. According to Department of Fish and Game, over a ten-year period, participation rates in freshwater and saltwater fishing have declined by 37 percent and 22 percent, respectively.

This is not good news for the future of recreational fishing and California's economy. Today, recreational fishing contributes over \$4.9 billion to our State's economy, supporting communities and jobs dependent on recreational tourism. However, with fewer Californians and visitors purchasing licenses, indications are that fishing's economic impact will decline.

Thankfully, Assembly Members Curt Hagman (R-Chino Hills) and Allan Mansoor (R-Costa Mesa) have a plan to protect recreational fishing. They have introduced Assembly Bill 1786 that would create a fishing license valid for a full 12 months. Yes, a sensible system that offers all anglers the same value for the same price.

This is also good news for the Department of Fish and Game. With



Simple remedies

greater enrollment, there will be more fees collected that fund fish stocking programs and conservation efforts for our future generations. All of which will ensure that California remains a tourism destination for millions of people who spend their hard earned dollars in our State each year.

Contact your State legislator this week and urge them to support sensible reforms that will encourage greater participation in a classic American pastime.

Marko Mlikotin is Executive Director of the California Association for Recreational Fishing. www.SaveCalFishing.org

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