

I am writing to urge you to support Mare Nostrum's campaign to pass the Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act (S.1106).

First and foremost, shark tourism comprises a significant proportion of the economy, ushering in \$909.4 million in revenue and 26,000 full-time jobs per year. Around 8 million snorkelers and divers also visit each year, generating an additional \$20 million profit. These figures stand in stark contrast to shark fin sales, which only account for a nationwide profit of \$1.03 million per year.

The object and purpose of S.1106 has also garnered popular support. A 2019 poll showed that 80% percent of respondents voted in support of the Act. S.1106 was also favorably reported without amendment by the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress' Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

The shark fin trade also risks the health and safety of the marine ecosystem and the American public alike. Within the last 15 years alone, shark finning and similar incidents of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing have culled shark populations by 80%. This is an incredibly concerning development, as sharks are an apex predator. They maintain and balance the ecosystem, and their presence (or, conversely, their absence) dramatically impacts all species below them on the food chain. Even if this dangerously sudden destabilization doesn't immediately cause the ecosystem to collapse, the results of the aforesaid carnage on marine life will still be felt for years to come. Meanwhile, leading health organizations have already issued an advisory against the consumption of shark meat by pregnant women and children. This threat is not only present to the most vulnerable among us; high levels of mercury in shark meat suggest consumption by the general population is inadvisable at best and toxic at worst.

Perhaps the most striking reason you should lend your support to S.1106, however, is that it furthers the United States' longstanding tradition of leading by example in marine conservation efforts. The U.S. outlawed shark finning years ago through legislation like the Shark Finning Prohibition Act (16 U.S.C. 1822 note) and the Shark and Fishery Conservation Act (Pub. L. 111-348 (124 Stat. 3668)). It stands to reason that a nation should not encourage ancillary practices of a trade it considers abhorrent—yet the U.S. has historically been silent when faced with the proposition of codifying such a commitment.

S.1106 seeks to remedy the United States' reticence by taking a strong stance against shark finning, proving to both ourselves and the world at large that we still deserve to carry the mantle of leadership concerning global conservation efforts.

For all of these reasons, I support Mare Nostrum's U.S. Chapter in its campaign efforts. I hope that I can count on you to support S.1106. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[NAME]