

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 Floridian 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 117th Congress' Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Moreover, the shark fin trade risks the safety of the marine ecosystem and the American public alike. Within the last 15 years, shark finning has culled shark populations by 80%, destabilizing the ecosystem. Meanwhile, leading health organizations have issued an advisory against the consumption of shark meat by pregnant women & children. This threat is not only present to the most vulnerable among us; high mercury levels in shark meat suggest consumption is inadvisable at best and toxic at worst.

S.1106 also closely resembles the Sustainable Shark Fisheries and Trade Act of 2018 (S.2764), which you sponsored. S.2764 required that nations looking to export shark products to the U.S. obtain certification showing they "prohibit shark finning." Its enforceability rested on the US' ability to lead by example. The US outlawed shark finning years ago—yet a nation should not encourage ancillary practices of a trade it considers abhorrent. S.1106 seeks to remedy this.

Finally, you claim you'd rather not support S.1106 because you want to prioritize "sustainable shark fishing by licensed fishermen." Sustainability is not easily ensured, however—especially not by the policies Florida espouses. A shark fishing license is not required when working from a vessel, which is how most industrial-level operations function. For those who need a license, one can be obtained via a short online quiz. Not only can that quiz be taken as many times as is necessary to pass, but it also fails to ask about recognizing endangered species. The only existing legislation regarding sustainable shark fishing, the Ocean Conservation Act, fails to establish a science-based management mechanism or authoritative body to guarantee adherence to biologically sustainable measures. All of this discourages fishermen from acting sustainably in favor of profiteering. S.1106 will alleviate the burden of having to make that choice while ensuring fishermen can still sell dogfish fins, which account for over 70% of total shark export value.

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