

U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation

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The Honorable Representative

U.S. House of Representatives / Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Senators

The U.S. Senate / U.S. Capitol Building / Washington, D.C. 20510

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Honorable Senators, Representative, and Dr. Lubchenco:

I understand the Shark Conservation Act of 2009 (H.R. 81) has been referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation after its passage in the House on March 3, 2009. I hope this bill moves quickly so that a ban on the amputation of shark fins is enforced.

Until fishermen stop severing fins and dumping mutilated sharks at sea, many species — including hammerheads and makos — remain vulnerable to extinction. Please support the Shark Conservation Act (H.R. 81), which mandates that sharks be landed with their fins naturally intact.

H.R. 81 amends the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to close a loophole that let boats transfer illegally acquired fins as long as sharks weren't butchered aboard the same boat.

An estimated 73 million sharks are killed annually. In most cases, their fins alone are sold for shark fin soup, an Asian delicacy. Though "finning" was outlawed in all U.S. waters in 2000, negligent fishing practices continue to hinder enforcement.

Finning is just plain cruel. Fishermen haul living sharks on to decks, slice off their fins, and toss them back to bleed to death or become defenseless prey at sea. It is time to end this crime against nature and promote conservation worldwide. Please do everything possible to ensure that the Shark Conservation Act passes into law.

Thank you,