

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2102

April 23, 2009

## *Help End Shark Finning and Promote the International Conservation of Sharks Cosponsor the Shark Conservation Act of 2009*

Dear Colleague:

Over the past 50 years, overfishing has depleted many of the world's shark populations by 80 percent or more. Growing demand for shark fins is driving much of this exploitation and contributing to the inhumane and wasteful practice of shark finning.

Nine years ago, Congress first addressed the need for international conservation of sharks by passing the Shark Finning Prohibition Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-557). Despite this effort, sharks continue to be one of the oceans' most imperiled species and require a stronger solution. That is why I ask you to join me in cosponsoring the Shark Conservation Act of 2009 to increase the enforcement of domestic shark finning regulations and further promote shark conservation on a global scale.

The Shark Conservation Act of 2009 will prohibit vessels from having custody, control, or possession of shark fins without the carcass. This provision is intended to ensure that vessels under U.S. jurisdiction are not traveling to the high seas to purchase fins from fishermen engaged in shark finning.

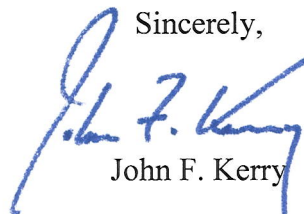
In addition, the bill specifically requires that sharks be landed with their fins naturally attached. Current law allows fins to be removed on the vessel as long as a fin-to-carcass weight ratio is not exceeded. However, this ratio is difficult to enforce, and fin removal makes species identification difficult. The bill's "fins attached" provision will ensure proper and consistent enforcement of regulations and allow species-specific landings data for better fishery management.

Lastly, this bill will amend the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act to allow the United States to take appropriate action against nations that do not have shark management regulations comparable to those of the U.S. Not only will this amendment promote shark conservation internationally, it will also help to level the playing field for U.S. fishermen.

The Shark Conservation Act of 2009 is critical for the proper management of sharks in both U.S and international waters. I urge you to join me in cosponsoring this timely and critical piece of legislation.

If you have any questions or would like to cosponsor, please contact Karena Neubauer at 4-2742. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry