

December 12

Good morning Deputy Mayor and Members of Council.

Our names are Emily Shilton, Saige Patti, and Nadia Igdoura. We are speaking on behalf of Westdale Secondary School's Students Bridging Borders, our student run Non-Government Organization. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

Students Bridging Borders has joined many other people across Canada who are now speaking out against the cruel and wasteful practice of Shark Finning.

It is estimated that up to 73 million sharks are killed each year because of the high value placed on their fins. Shark finning involves slicing off a live shark's fins and throwing the rest of the less valuable body back into the ocean to die. Sharks survive the removal of their fins only to suffer a slow and agonizing death, usually by drowning among other shark carcasses. Shark fishers discard the carcass because storage space on fishing boats is limited. It is more profitable to transport only the fins.

Shark finning has been illegal in Canada since 1994, but importing shark fins still has a great impact on the decline of the shark species.

Shark finning is almost entirely unmonitored. A common method of capturing sharks uses long lines. These lines can be up to 80 miles with 40 thousand hooks. Long lines kill thousands of marine animals, endangered and legally protected shark and turtles, as well as sea birds. Sharks are slow to reproduce and can't sustain the pressure caused by this over-fishing. One third of all shark species are now threatened with extinction. In the last fifteen years some populations have declined up to 90%. Seven shark species are protected under the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, but they are still being slaughtered.

We can't predict the long-term effects of this population decline, but we know Sharks are an important apex predator in our ocean ecosystems. The loss of sharks is an international conservation crisis - requiring countries like Canada to participate in implementing a shark fin ban. Without an international ban we could witness the total collapse of worldwide shark populations.

Sharks have been on earth for 400 million years.

Each year people swim more than 7 billion times and there are less than 100 shark incidents - making sharks one of the most harmless large predators. Car accidents kill 115 people every day. Starvation kills 6 million children annually. Each year, only five people die from shark incidents while we kill millions of sharks.

Many people around the world have been moved to take action. Internationally, a consensus is building against this unsustainable practice. There are shark fin bans in a number of jurisdictions including California, Hawaii, Washington, Oregon and Guam. There have also been bans in the Canadian municipalities of Brantford, Oakville, Mississauga, Toronto, London and Pickering.

In our city, Students Bridging Borders has obtained over 1000 petition signatures. Hamiltonians recognize that a Canadian shark fin ban is essential in the global effort to end this reckless practice. We will be contributing these signatures to the petition of Fin Donnelly, MP for New Westminster-Coquitlam and Port Moody.

On December 8th, Fin Donnelly introduced legislation to amend the Fish Inspection Act to prohibit the import of shark fins that are not attached to the shark carcass without a permit, and only for scientific research that supports shark conservation. We will distribute copies to you. Canada can take a leadership role on this issue.

Today, we ask that Hamilton City Council help move towards a Canadian Shark Fin Ban. We encourage you to support Councillor McHattie's Motion.

We provided the documentary "Sharkwater" to each of you and hope that you have all had the chance to watch it. We would collect these copies for further use.

Thank you.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 8, 2011

NDP INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO PROHIBIT IMPORT OF SHARK FIN TO CANADA

OTTAWA – Today, NDP Fisheries and Oceans Critic Fin Donnelly, MP (New Westminster-Coquitlam and Port Moody) introduced legislation that would amend the Fish Inspection Act to prohibit the import of shark fin to Canada. The bill would also amend the Fisheries Act to put into law the prohibition of shark finning in Canadian waters.

“With millions of sharks being killed each year for their fins, this international conservation crisis requires immediate action,” said Donnelly. “The targeting of sharks for their fins is causing a rapid decline in shark populations which is having a negative impact on marine ecosystems around the world.”

It is estimated that up to 73 million sharks are killed annually for their fins, often by a practice called shark finning, where the fins are cut off the shark and the body is dumped back into the ocean. In 2009, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature reported over one-third of all shark species are threatened with extinction as a result of shark finning. In just a few decades, some regional shark populations have declined by over 95%, and their populations continue to decline. Some scientists predict that by 2017, up to 20 species of sharks could become functionally extinct.

“The Canadian government can take a leadership role on this critical issue and adopt legislation that will protect sharks and promote international ocean stewardship,” said Donnelly. “This legislation would curb the import of illegal shark fins to Canada and make our country a world leader in the movement to protect sharks.”

Donnelly undertook a series of cross country consultations with various organizations in preparation for his legislation. His office commissioned a Mustel poll in British Columbia which showed that almost 84% of residents support a federal import ban. Last Friday, he launched a petition which has already been signed by over 3000 Canadians.

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For more information:

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SECRET

C-

First Session, Forty-first Parliament,
60 Elizabeth II, 2011

HOUSE OF COMMONS OF CANADA

BILL C-

An Act to amend the Fish Inspection Act and the Fisheries Act
(importation of shark fins)

FIRST READING, _____, 2011

Notice of Introduction	
Notice is hereby given of my intention to introduce this bill	
Print	<input type="text"/> copies (up to 500 copies at no cost) for my office
Print	<input type="text"/> extra copies (billed to Member's Operating Budget) for my office

Signature of Member / Date

MR. DONNELLY

SECRET

C-

Première session, quarante et unième législature,
60 Elizabeth II, 2011

CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES DU CANADA

PROJET DE LOI C-

Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'inspection du poisson et la Loi sur les
pêches (importation de nageoires de requin)

PREMIÈRE LECTURE LE _____ 2011

Avis de présentation	
Avis est donné par les présentes de mon intention de déposer ce projet de loi	
Imprimez	<input type="text"/> copies (jusqu'à 500 copies sans frais) pour mon bureau
Imprimez	<input type="text"/> copies supplémentaires (facturées au budget de fonctionnement du député) pour mon bureau

Signature du député / Date

M. DONNELLY

HOUSE OF COMMONS OF CANADA

CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES DU CANADA

BILL C-

PROJET DE LOI C-

An Act to amend the Fish Inspection Act and the Fisheries Act (importation of shark fins)

Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'inspection du poisson et la Loi sur les pêches (importation de nageoires de requin)

Preamble

Whereas in 1994 the Canadian Government banned shark finning—namely, the practice of removing the fins from sharks and discarding the remainder of the sharks while at sea—in Canadian fisheries waters and with respect to Canadian licensed vessels fishing outside of Canada's exclusive economic zone;

Whereas Canadians are increasingly aware of the devastating effect of the continuing practice of shark finning and the resulting decline in shark species in Canadian waters and around the world and support measures to stop this practice and to ensure the responsible conservation, management and exploitation of sharks;

And whereas the importation of shark fins is not supportable in the face of the dramatic decline in shark species;

Now, therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

SHORT TITLE

Short Title

1. This Act may be cited as the *Ban on Shark Fin Importation Act*.

Attendu :

qu'en 1994 le gouvernement du Canada a interdit, dans les eaux de pêche canadiennes et pour les bateaux immatriculés au Canada qui pêchent à l'extérieur de la zone économique exclusive du Canada, l'enlèvement des nageoires de requin, pratique qui consiste à couper les nageoires du requin et à jeter le reste de la carcasse en mer;

que la population canadienne est de plus en plus consciente des effets dévastateurs de cette pratique et du déclin des espèces de requins dans les eaux canadiennes et à l'échelle mondiale qui en découle, et qu'elle appuie les mesures prises pour y mettre fin et assurer la conservation, la gestion et l'exploitation responsables des requins;

que l'importation de nageoires de requin n'est pas justifiable au vu du déclin marquant des espèces de requins,

Sa Majesté, sur l'avis et avec le consentement du Sénat et de la Chambre des communes du Canada, édicte :

TITRE ABRÉGÉ

Préambule

Titre abrégé

1. *Loi interdisant l'importation de nageoires de requin.*

Shark Finning Facts

- Shark finning is the practice of removing the fins from living sharks and discarding the remainder of the shark at sea. Because the profits from the sale of shark meat are significantly less than the profits from the sale of other species of fish – particularly tuna and billfish – and because storage space on fishing vessels is limited, it is often more profitable for shark fishers to simply discard the carcasses and transport the detached fins. Sharks usually survive the excision of their fins, only to suffer a slow and agonizing death – usually by drowning amidst other finned shark carcasses, or being eaten by predators.
- The practice of shark finning exists principally because of the demand for shark fin soup, and 50% of the world trade of shark fins takes place in Hong Kong.
- Estimates of the total number of sharks traded annually worldwide ranges from 26-73 million per year, with an overall median of 38 million per year. Sharks are slow to reproduce, and cannot sustain the fishing pressures they are under. In 2009, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature reported over one-third of all shark species are threatened with extinction as a result of shark finning.
- According to the United Nations Environment Program, shark populations have plunged by 90% in the Gulf of Mexico and the Mediterranean Sea, and by 75% in the northwestern Atlantic Ocean in the last 15 years. Seven shark species – the great white, basking, whale, porbeagle, spiny dogfish, and shortfin and longfin mako sharks – are now protected under the UN-backed Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- Internationally, a consensus is building on the cruel and unsustainable nature of this practice, with the sale of shark fin and/or the practice of finning at sea already banned in a number of jurisdictions, including Chile, Ecuador, Honduras and the Bahamas. In the United States, Hawaii, California, Washington, Oregon and Guam have all passed legislation banning the practice.
- Shark finning is illegal in Canada. Several municipalities have already banned shark fin including Mississauga and Toronto.
- Shark fishing is usually performed using longline fishing and has a high by-catch of other fish, including tuna and swordfish. Longline fishing is indiscriminate, catching not only the target, but also other species, including endangered and legally protected sharks, and leatherback and loggerhead turtles. Sea birds are also often victims of longlines.
- Without an international ban on the practice of shark finning at sea – and a robust enforcement mechanism – we could very likely witness the total collapse of worldwide shark populations, and the disruption and decimation of other fish populations and ocean ecosystems.

Shark Conservation: A Timeline

2011: The California legislature passes bill banning shark fin trade

2011: Taiwan announced that it would implement a fins-naturally-attached policy to reduce shark catches beginning in 2012.

2011: The Chilean National Congress passed legislation prohibiting shark finning, requiring that shark catches that land ashore must have their fins naturally attached to the bodies.

2011: Washington Governor signs SB 5688, which prohibits people from selling, trading or distributing shark fins or derivative products including cartilage supplements.

2011: Guam governor signed into law Bill 44-31, which prohibits any person from possessing, selling or distributing shark fins in Guam.

2011: Oregon State passes HB 2838, which prohibits people from possessing, selling, trading or distributing shark fins.

2011: The Bahamas government declared its national waters a shark sanctuary, banning all commercial shark fishing.

2011: Honduras announced a permanent shark sanctuary in its national waters.

2011: The government of Costa Rica held a shark finning side event at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Committee on Fisheries meeting to present the video from the September 2010 workshop and hold a panel discussion on the fins-attached method of banning shark finning.

2011: The U.S. Shark Conservation Act, which strengthens the U.S. finning ban by closing loopholes in the 2000 ban, was passed.

2010: A law prohibiting the sale, possession and distribution of shark fins and shark fin products is enacted in Hawaii.

2010: An EU Written Declaration on shark finning got the highest number of signatures out of all Written Declarations in 2010. Its adoption was followed by a European Parliamentary Resolution urging the Commission to produce a legislative proposal supporting a ban on removal of shark fins at sea.

2010: Proposals were put forward at both the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to strengthen shark finning bans by requiring that sharks be landed whole, but both failed to gain consensus and were not adopted.

2010: Costa Rica hosted a regional capacity building workshop on landing sharks with fins naturally attached to help end shark finning.

2010: The United Nations (UN) Fish Stocks Agreement urged that countries strengthen finning bans and consider requiring that sharks be landed whole, with fins attached.

2010: A record number of eight species of shark, including oceanic whitetip, porbeagle, hammerhead and spiny dogfish, were proposed for but failed to gain protection from international trade at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

2010: The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) established a non-binding global instrument on shark conservation.

2009: The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) became the first international fisheries management body to adopt shark fishing regulations by banning the retention of bigeye thresher sharks; however, a proposal to land sharks with fins attached was rejected.

2008: CMS added shortfin and longfin mako sharks, porbeagle sharks and the northern hemisphere population of spiny dogfish sharks to its Appendix II list of protected species.

2007: The UN General Assembly recommended that countries strengthen shark finning bans and consider requiring that sharks be landed with fins attached, the most effective method of ending the cruel practice of shark finning (which also helps to reduce the amount of sharks killed by commercial fisheries).