



MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM



SAN FRANCISCO BAYKEEPER



California Fish and Game Wardens' Association

The Thin Green Line

September 7, 2011

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown Jr.  
Governor of California  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA

Re: AB 376 (Fong, Huffman) – **Support**

Dear Governor Brown,

Our organizations are gravely concerned about the rapid decline of the ocean's shark populations and strongly support AB 376 (Fong, Huffman), legislation that seeks to end California's contribution to the shark fin trade.

Sharks occupy the top of the ocean ecosystem and play a critical role in managing and maintaining overall ocean health. Though these creatures have survived for over 400 million years, the shark fin trade has created dramatic reductions in the number of sharks and has thereby reduced the ecological services that they provide. A shark's fin fetches astronomical sums up to 250 times the value of its body. This economic distortion drives fin traders to kill as many sharks as possible for the fin alone - up to 9,000 sharks every hour.

The shark fin trade drives overfishing, poaching, waste, cruelty and puts these vulnerable animals at risk of local and worldwide extinction. There are simply not enough sharks to meet the demand for fins. Current California and federal laws that ban the practice of finning at sea are insufficient to stem these catastrophic shark declines. U.S. fishermen exploit a loophole in the law that allows them to fin sharks once they reach the docks, and traders continue to import fins from other places that do not enjoy these laws.

California is a significant market and trading point for the shark fin trade and contributes to the problem facing our ocean ecosystem. AB 376 will help ensure that we protect the health of our ocean, on its own and particularly when combined with actions recently taken by our neighbor states to ban the trade from those states. We know that trade bans work to cost-effectively protect vulnerable species and related ecosystems. In recent history the ivory trade, the bear paw trade, and several other highly sought rare or luxury products like shark fin were banned to ensure that our environment is sustained now and for future generations.

Thank you for considering AB 376; we respectfully urge you to sign this bill into law.