

**Participants in the Sustainable and Conservatively-Managed  
U.S. Commercial Shark Fishery Respectfully Urge Congress to Oppose the  
Shark Fin Trade Elimination Act, S. 3095 & H.R. 5584**

We are commercial shark fishermen and fish houses that deal in sharks. As such, we are directly impacted by the Shark Fin Trade Elimination Act (“SFTEA”), S. 3095 & H.R. 5584, introduced in the Senate and House by Senator Booker and Representative Sablan, respectively. **We strongly urge you to oppose this bill** that will **destroy U.S. jobs** and **harm coastal economies** while providing **no environment benefits**.

SFTEA requires fishermen to discard a valuable food product, the shark fin. It deprives hardworking fishermen of income and struggling fishing communities of much needed economic activity. It would have a small but negative impact on the United States’ balance of trade with China. Perhaps worse of all, it would mean more sharks are caught in an unsustainable way.

To be clear, SFTEA would spell the end to virtually all legal and sustainable commercial shark fishing in the U.S. Roughly **half the value of an adult coastal shark is in its fins**. Accounting for fuel, bait, crew, and equipment costs incurred in a fishing trip, loss of fin revenue would make directed shark fishery unprofitable. This fishery contributes a significant – and for some of us, the overwhelming majority – of our income. Given that fishermen face significant fixed costs, such as vessel mortgages and insurance, **these bills threaten our continued ability to maintain our businesses and provide for our families**.

We oppose the practice of shark finning. The industry supported Congress’ past efforts to end the practice here and abroad. Shark finning wastes healthful protein that can feed a hungry world. Moreover, our industry has been harmed by illegal shark fins that compete unfairly with our legal product. Ironically, banning domestic trade in domestic shark fins only **opens the international market for more unsustainably harvested shark fins** from nations unbound by U.S. law.

To be clear, **the only beneficiaries of this bill will be the unregulated international fleets engaging in the very practice this bill seeks to end**. While the amount of fins the U.S. exports are relatively minor, recently on the order of three percent, that share of the market will go to fishermen in other countries for whom shark finning provides a cost advantage.

We also support efforts to maintain a well-managed and sustainable shark fishery in the U.S. and globally. While we believe some sharks’ abundance justifies higher catch quotas, there is no dispute that U.S. management has resulted in a tremendous growth in domestic shark populations. Last year’s survey found an astonishing **65 percent more sharks** than the one prior. The index of **shark abundance in 2015 was the highest in the survey’s 29-year history**. As a result, the National Marine Fisheries Service just increased the retention limit on large coastal sharks.

This resurgence of sharks was built on our sacrifices over the past twenty years. Those of us that remain in business have weathered **quota reductions of more than fifty percent**. That has meant many lean years. All that sacrifice will be for naught, however, should S. 3095 become law.

These bills are inconsistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act's primary mission of maximizing food production, economic returns, and recreational opportunities in a manner consistent with maintaining healthy marine resources and environments. **The United States has demonstrated that it is possible to conduct a responsible and profitable shark fishery, one that serves as a model for other nations.** Mandating waste of a valuable and renewable marine product, as does the SFTEA, is not consistent with our management principles. It is also not consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act to render a sustainable fishery uneconomic. There is no reason to expect that other nations would follow this wasteful example.

SFTEA is of concern to all fishermen. If Congress were to eliminate a responsible fishery without regard to science, economics, management principles, or practical effect to satisfy narrow special interest groups, all fisheries are at risk. That is part of the reason groups like the Garden State Seafood Association, North Carolina Fisheries Association, Southeastern Fisheries Association, and Louisiana Shrimpers Association that represent more than shark fishermen oppose these bills.

Attached is brief fact sheet on the domestic shark fishery that details these and other concerns we have with the Act. We are happy to answer any questions you have or provide any further information you may find helpful. You may contact our representative, Mr. Shaun Gehan, at (202) 412-2508 for more information.

Sincerely,

Safe Harbour Seafood, Bon Secour, AL  
 Madeira Beach Seafood, Madeira Beach, FL  
 Seafood Atlantic, Port Canaveral, FL  
 AP Bell Seafood, Madeira Beach, FL  
 Kings Seafood, Port Orange, FL  
 Omni Shrimp Company, Madeira Beach, FL  
 Phoenix Fisheries, Southport, FL  
 Hull's Seafood Markets, Inc., Ormond Beach, FL  
 Ocean Fresh Seafood, New Orleans, LA  
 Southern Seafood Connect'n, Crisfield, MD  
 Avon Seafood, Avon, NC  
 O'Neal's Sea Harvest, Wanchese, NC  
 B & J Seafood, New Bern, NC  
 Crystal Coast Fisheries, Morehead City, NC  
 Carolina Seafood, Rutledge Leeland, SC

Bryant Products, Bayou La Batre, AL  
 Save On Seafood, St. Petersburg, FL  
 Greg Abrams Seafood, Panama City, FL  
 Fishermen's Ice & Bait, Madeira Beach, FL  
 Wild Ocean Market Seafood, Titusville, FL  
 Day Boat Seafood, Lake Park, FL  
 Directed Shark Fisheries, Daytona Bch., FL  
 Phillips Seafood, Townsend, GA  
 Venice Fish and Shrimp, Venice, LA  
 Crystal Coast Fisheries, Morehead City, NC  
 Wanchese Fisheries, Wanchese, NC  
 Jeffery's Seafood, Hatteras, NC  
 Willie R. Etheridge Seafood, Wanchese, NC  
 Viking Village Seafood, Barnegat Light, NJ

F/V Angelina  
 F/V Chase  
 F/V Honey Bee  
 F/V Miss Brianna  
 F/V Rachaelle Nicole  
 F/V Taurus  
 F/V Miss Alexis  
 F/V Reel of Fortune  
 F/V Butter

F/V Blake  
 F/V Coupe de Grille  
 F/V Juma  
 F/V Miss Maggie  
 F/V Right Stuff  
 F/V Tobo  
 F/V Miss Jessica  
 F/V B.C.  
 F/V Sharon G

F/V Blue Water  
 F/V Fishhawk  
 F/V Michelle Marie  
 F/V Miss Rita  
 F/V Sword Fish  
 F/V Boss Lady  
 F/V J. O'Neal  
 F/V Bobalou  
 F/V Watersport

F/V Little Clam	F/V Windy Gale	F/V Logan's Luck
F/V M B	F/V Miss Megan	F/V Shannon D
F/V Sundog	F/V Bout Time	F/V Raven
F/V Sarah Brent	F/V Miss Kaleigh	F/V Miss Madeline
F/V Salvation	F/V Wahoo	F/V Miss Stevie
F/V Shannon Dun	F/V Miss Everett	F/V Blue Fin
F/V Body Count	F/V Little Jo	F/V Gail Mist II
F/V Haley Rose	F/V Black Jack	F/V No Limit
F/V Toucan	F/V Jodie Lynn III	F/V Lady Martiza
F/V Out of Hand	F/V Islander	F/V Top Tuna
F/V Fish Hound	F/V Captain Lynn	F/V Miss Shell
F/V Lisa Ann	F/V Daytona	F/V Miss Haley II
F/V Right on Time	F/V Crosswinds IV	F/V Miss Brenda Louise
F/V Leo B.	F/V Endeavor	F/V Jean Marie
F/V Miss Ann	F/V Capt. Gorman III	F/V Denise Ann
F/V Hull's Sea Lover	F/V 2nd Wind	F/V Pancake
F/V Elizabeth	F/V Emily's Weigh	F/V Albi
F/V Big Eye	F/V Chances R III	F/V Christopher Joe
F/V Day Boat III	F/V Day Boat One	F/V Day Boat Too
F/V Die Trying	F/V Dusty Boy	F/V Erica Lynn
F/V High Voltage	F/V Janice Ann	F/V JC 31
F/V Joshua Nicole	F/V Kelly Ann	F/V Knotty Girl
F/V Lady Linda	F/V Miss Jane	F/V Miss Sierra
F/V My Girl	F/V Osprey	F/V Parker
F/V Provider	F/V Right On Time	F/V Sea Hawk
F/V Shooting Star	F/V Standin' Up	F/V Stella Maris
F/V Straight Flush	F/V Susie Two	F/V Swordfin
F/V T&Sea	F/V Theresa C	F/V Two Can
F/V Two Sons	F/V Vicki Ann	F/V Virgin Hooker
F/V Vitamin Sea	F/V White Water	F/V Whitewater II
F/V Yellowfin	F/V Dana Christine II	

ENCLOSURE

## **FACTS REGARDING THE DOMESTIC COMMERCIAL SHARK FISHERY AND THE SHARK FIN TRADE ELIMINATION ACT**

- The U.S. is a global leader in conservation and management of sharks, and chief opponent of the wasteful practice of “shark finning” – discarding shark meat and landing only the fins. Finning has been federally prohibited since 1993, while the shark population has been growing since 2000. In 2015, the National Marine Fisheries Service’s shark survey found the most in its 29-year history, 65% more than the prior survey.
- The industry opposes finning, but the Shark Fin Trade Elimination Act goes too far. Fins account for 50% of a shark’s landed value. Without income from these, revenue from sharks would not cover fuel costs and our fishery will cease. **This bill will destroy a successful fishery and harm small fishing communities.**
- The government should not deny American people access to this healthful product or fishing communities important income from a sustainable fishery.
- Virtually all fins are exported, overwhelmingly to China. This trade plays a small, but important role in improving our balance of trade.
- The bill provides **no conservation benefit** and will likely **harm international shark conservation**. Destruction of fins is equally as wasteful as discarding shark meat. Moreover, the small portion of fins taken off the international market will be replaced, likely by fins from unsustainable and unregulated fisheries where finning provides a cost advantage.
- Demand for shark fins, culturally important in Asia, will not abate soon. The U.S. can help promote responsible shark fishing practices through participation in international forums. Our authority will be weakened if the U.S. abandons its own model shark fishery and instead promotes the extreme, wasteful, and uneconomic policy of fin destruction.
- Analogies to trade bans on ivory and rhino horns are misplaced:
  - Unlike these large land animals, sharks are more protected by their marine habitat and highly migratory behavior. Shark fishing can be conducted sustainably.
  - Also, unlike ivory, the U.S. is not a major market for fins. Its absence from the marketplace will do nothing to effect demand.
  - These bans have been far from successful. Trade has been forced underground where it cannot be regulated. The shark fin trade is even less amenable to policing as sharks occur globally in all oceans and seas.
  - Most importantly, unlike rhinos and elephants, sharks are fully utilized for food, as well as for their skin, cartilage, livers, teeth, and jaws, providing multiple economic benefits. They are a renewable resource for a hungry world.

**These bills reward bad actors and harm those who play by the rules.** Congress should urge NMFS to finalize its list of shark finning nations under the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Act and impose an import moratorium on those that fail to stop the practice.

Congress should also support America’s law-abiding shark fishermen and their communities by ensuring that they can obtain the full value of their highly limited catch no matter where they live.