



March 13th, 2018

Dear Member of Congress:

We write in support of the Sustainable Shark Fisheries and Trade Act of 2018. The U.S. already has strong laws and regulations governing the management of commercially traded shark, skate and ray fisheries. This legislation would help promote the sustainable management of shark fisheries globally by ensuring that all shark, ray and skate products entering U.S. markets come from fisheries with comparable conservation and management practices. This approach serves a valuable dual purpose—improving the global management of these fisheries while leveling the playing field for U.S. commercial fishermen.

There are more than 1,250 species of cartilaginous fishes—sharks and their relatives, which include skates and rays—and while the conservation status of nearly half these species is poorly known, one-quarter are estimated to be threatened with extinction. As species that grow slowly, mature late, and have few young, they are particularly vulnerable to overexploitation. Overfishing is the primary threat to many of these species.

Although a large number of shark, skate, and ray species are struggling, evidence suggests that with effective fishery management, many species can be sustainably fished and commercially traded while maintaining healthy populations. Markets for shark fins and meat are important drivers of fisheries for these products, and other products like liver oil, cartilage, and skin are also valued and traded for, forming the basis of livelihoods for people and communities both in the U.S. and around the world.

We support the Sustainable Shark Fisheries and Trade Act's approach of requiring that shark, skate and ray products imported to the U.S. come from fisheries managed under strong standards, similar to those already required by U.S. law. This includes science-based management of related fisheries that prevents overfishing and rebuilds overfished stocks. By holding imported products to the same standards as U.S. fisheries, the U.S. can promote sustainable shark, skate and ray fisheries globally while also supporting the market for well-managed U.S. fisheries. I urge you to support this legislation.

As a significant shark, ray and skate fishing and trading country and a global leader in the conservation of these species, the U.S. has an important role to play in promoting sustainable shark, skate and ray fishery management in the U.S. and abroad. We endorse the Sustainable Shark Fisheries and Trade Act of 2018 and urge its prompt passage by Congress.

Sincerely,

Tara Reimer  
Chief Executive Officer  
Alaska SeaLife Center

Glenn Dobrogosz  
Chief Executive Officer  
Greensboro Science Center

Jack Racanelli  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
National Aquarium

Dan Ashe  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Association of Zoos & Aquariums

Alison Prange  
Executive Director  
Henry Vilas Zoo

Kurt Strand  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
National Mississippi River  
Museum & Aquarium

Michael S. Schaad  
Director  
Cabrillo Marine Aquarium

Azzedine Downes  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
International Fund for Animal Welfare

Eric Rose  
Vice President & Executive Director  
National Aquarium  
Ocean Park Conservation Foundation  
Hong Kong

Mike McGee  
Chief Financial Officer  
California Academy of Sciences  
Children's Aquarium at Fair Park

Jacksonville University

Cynthia Claus  
Director  
Jenkinson's Aquarium

Chris Fischer  
Founding Chairman  
Ocearch

Christopher Kuhar  
Director  
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Kevin Bell  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Lincoln Park Zoo

Dwight Lawson, PhD  
Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer  
Oklahoma City Zoo

Gregg Dancho  
Director  
Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo

Chuck Wikenhauser  
Director  
Milwaukee County Zoo

Bridget Baratta  
Chief Development Officer  
Palm Beach Zoo

Ron Kagan  
Director & Chief Executive Officer  
Detroit Zoological Society

John A. Zendt  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Moody Gardens

Alan Varsik  
Director  
Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium  
Northwest Trek Wildlife Park

El Paso Zoo

Jack Mulvena  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Naples Zoo

Jeremy Goodman  
Executive Director  
Roger Williams Zoo

Larry Killmar  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Florida Association of Zoos & Aquariums  
Lowry Park Zoo

Michael Macek  
Chief Operating Officer  
Saint Louis Zoo

Kevin Mills  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
South Carolina Aquarium

The WAVE Foundation

Steve Shurter  
Executive Director  
White Oak Conservation

Richard Block  
Chief Executive Officer  
Santa Barbara Zoo

Roger Germann  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
The Florida Aquarium

John Calvelli  
Executive Vice President, Public Affairs  
Wildlife Conservation Society

SEA LIFE Aquarium at LEGOLAND  
California Resort

Jeff Sailer  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Toledo Zoo

Alejandro Grajal, PhD  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Woodland Park Zoo

Robert W. Davidson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Seattle Aquarium

Terrie Correll  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Tulsa Zoo

William Moore  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Zoo Miami

Christopher Dold  
Chief Zoological Officer  
SeaWorld Parks

Cynthia Whitebred-Spanoulis  
Executive Director  
Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

John Linehan  
Chief Executive Officer  
Zoo New England

Jeff Ettling, PhD  
Executive Director  
Sedgwick County Zoo

Greg Bockheim  
Executive Director  
Virginia Zoo

Dr. Bridget Coughlin  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Shedd Aquarium