

# Shark Fin Ban Bill Sails through House Committee

A bill to ban shark fins in Illinois won approval by a key House panel. The House Consumer Protection Committee voted unanimously to prohibit the possession, sale and distribution of shark fins in the state.

"Cruelly destroying animals that sit on the top of the food chain threatens to disrupt the underwater ecosystem," said State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago), the plan's sponsor. "With this bill, we can proactively protect the environment and defend the humane treatment of wild animals."

The legislation, House Bill 4119, responds to the largely unregulated

Hunters catch the sharks, cut off the fins while the animal is still alive, and toss the rest of the shark back into the ocean — often still alive — to make room on the boat for the more profitable fins. Unable to obtain enough oxygen without their fins, the sharks eventually drown or are consumed by other animals.

The fins, an Asian delicacy, are primarily used in a soup known for its steep price tag, but have a relatively flavorless taste. California, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii already have shark fin bans in place.

"Here in Illinois, we are finding that little or no restaurant opposition exists to a shark fin ban because there is so little demand for shark fin soup here," said Feigenholtz.

The full House will consider the legislation in the coming weeks.