

DIGITAL JOURNAL

Illinois State Senator Champions Shark Fin Bill with Support from Shark Stewards

Chicago, IL (PRWEB) April 30, 2012

Situated on the largest body of fresh surface water on the planet, Chicago has no sharks swimming in its waters, but this has not deterred Illinois citizens from advocating on their behalf. House Bill 4119, sponsored by Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago), would ban the sale, trade, distribution or possession of shark fins. The bill, which recently passed in the Illinois House with an 81-33 vote, is moving through the legislative process with new leadership from the Illinois Senate Senator Antonio Muñoz. The proposed law just passed through the Illinois Senate Environment Committee, bringing it closer to the Governor's signature.

Senator Muñoz has received a warm embrace from his district's residents, which includes Chicago's world-renowned Chinatown. Home to a major shipping port, shark fin traders, and scores of restaurants serving shark fin soup, Chicago is moving swiftly to pass legislation that would help save our oceans by protecting declining shark populations around the world. The shark fin trade is widely believed to drive the worldwide overfishing of sharks; 73-100 million sharks are killed every year. According to scientists, at least 107 species of sharks worldwide have had population sizes so reduced that they are threatened with extinction.

"The process of [shark finning](#) – killing sharks solely for the fins – is wasteful, cruel and causing shark populations to decline dramatically," explains David McGuire, award-winning conservation filmmaker, marine biologist and executive director of Shark Stewards, a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to conserving oceans through the protection of sharks. "When shark populations are reduced, the overall health of ocean ecosystems declines. By reducing the demand for shark fin, we can help stop the devastation occurring in our oceans." McGuire helped drive a shark fin ban in California, and similar laws have also passed in Hawaii, Washington, and Oregon with bipartisan support.

"I am thrilled to help sharks here in Chicago," said Janet Thomas, chair of the of Shark Stewards' Illinois Chapter. Thomas, a dive expedition leader and owner of [3rd Coast Cafe](#), is also a resident in Senator Muñoz's district. To garner increased grassroots support to protect shark populations and support ocean health, Shark Stewards is presently creating a legislative toolkit to support volunteers for similar legislation in other states and abroad. For more information and resources, visit <http://www.sharkstewards.org>.

Contact:

David McGuire

seasteward(at)gmail(dot)com

415-350-3790

Read the full story at <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2012/4/prweb9460145.htm>