To: The Honorable Senator Bill Montford  
Chairman Environmental and Natural Resources Committee  
410 Senate Building  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100  

Re: SB 352 (Shark Fin Sale and Trade) - IN SUPPORT

Dear Senator Montford,

Thank you for considering legislation to stop the sale and trade of shark fins in Florida. On behalf of Earth Law Center, I highly urge you to support SB 352.

Earth Law Center (ELC) works to develop laws that enhance nature’s capacity to support life (including human life). Humans and nature are interdependent, and we cannot realize the fulfillment of human rights without a healthy environment to support them. ELC recognizes that Nature (species and ecosystems) has inherent rights to exist and flourish, and we have a responsibility to support and protect those rights. In fact, over 20 countries (http://bit.ly/RoNexamples), and two dozen municipalities in the United States protect in law the Rights of Nature to exist, thrive and evolve.

Sharks are beings with inherent rights, including the right to life, to continue their vital cycles, and to not be subjected to cruelty. Yet, the global shark fin trade and overfishing continue to violate their right to exist, pushing one-third of the species towards extinction- for a cruel and unsustainable practice (both economically and environmentally). You can take a stand recognizing the rights of sharks to exist by supporting this bill.

Additionally, sharks are a keystone species playing an essential role in the health and functioning of marine ecosystems. Studies show that the overfishing of sharks has led to the degradation of entire ecosystems and loss of profit from fisheries. Protecting sharks, by stopping the flow of their fins in Florida, will have positive benefits for the ocean and ourselves. In fact, the total economic impact for shark tourism in Florida in 2016 was $377 million dollars versus a benefit of only $1.03 million for the export of shark fins. For tourism benefits to continue into the future, sharks need to be alive. It is vital we support healthy shark populations by disincentivizing the shark fin practice.

Thank you again for your consideration of this highly important legislation, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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