

**HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans  
Legislative Hearing including H.R. 737 and H.R. 1809  
March 26, 2019

Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member McClintock, fellow Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for including two of my bills in today's hearing:

- H.R. 737, eliminating the sale of shark fins in the United States, and
- H.R. 1809, providing parity for the U.S. insular areas and the District of Columbia under both the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act and the Dingell-Johnson Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act.

The *Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act* has 177 co-sponsors to date, including 43 of our Republican colleagues.

Twelve states and three of the insular areas have already passed legislation banning the sale of shark fins. Numerous corporations, including UPS, Amazon, Disney, Hilton, GrubHub have policies in place to block the trade in shark fins. Even China's three state-owned airlines are all on-board.

And, of course, the legislation is supported by leading environmental and animal rights organizations such as Oceana, the Humane Society Legislative Fund, Animal Wellness Action, and the Animal Welfare Institute, and by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Why does this legislation have such broad support?

Because every year as many as 73 million sharks are being slaughtered for their fins – just their fins.

The Chamorro and Refaluwasch people, the indigenous cultures of the Mariana islands, made their living from the sea. We would never have wasted what we harvested. Perhaps, because of that tradition the Marianas was one of the first U.S. jurisdictions to ban shark finning. The shark fin ban before us today, which I first introduced in 2014, is based on that Marianas' law.

The ancient people of the Marianas understood that, ultimately, all life depends on the health of the oceans. And, as we all understand today, the health of any ecosystem is dependent on its top predators.

Yet, sharks, among the ocean's top predators, are today at risk.

As a representative sample of the scientific literature, I ask unanimous consent to add to the record a 2013 statistical analysis from the journal Marine Policy titled Global catches, exploitation rates, and rebuilding options for sharks.

*[Hearing none, so ordered.]*

Researchers estimate that as many as 8 percent of all sharks worldwide are killed each year. This exceeds the average rebound rates of under 5 percent and explains why shark populations are in decline.

As lead author Boris Worm of Dalhousie University in Halifax, observed: "Protective measures must be scaled up significantly in order to avoid further depletion and the possible extinction of many shark species in our lifetime."

That is what my bill does. It bars the sale of shark fins in our country and by doing so reduces demand for shark fins worldwide. By reducing demand for shark fins alone we force wiser use of our ocean resources, protecting their ecological and economic value for us all today and for those who come after us.

I ask for this Subcommittee's favorable support of H.R. 737.

My second bill on the agenda, H.R. 1809, also aims to restore wildlife and, also, has bipartisan support. In fact, the bill passed the House in the last Congress by unanimous consent, though the Senate failed to act.

Introduced previously by our former colleague from Guam, Madeleine Bordallo, the legislation simply gives the insular areas and the District of Columbia the same base funding as states under the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Acts. This is like the changes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund that Congress approved in February and the President signed into law on March 12.

Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson support a variety of conservation, education, and recreation programs at no cost to taxpayers.

I ask for this Subcommittee's support of H.R. 1809.

And I hope we will be able to move both H.R. 737 and H.R. 1809 quickly out of committee to the floor for consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.