

OCEAN WILDLIFE CAMPAIGN,

Washington, DC, September 22, 1999.

Hon. RANDY CUNNINGHAM,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE CUNNINGHAM: We are writing to express serious concern regarding the management and health of shark populations in U.S. Pacific waters, specifically in areas under the jurisdiction of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WESPAC). Driven by the international demand for shark fin soup, the practice of shark finning—cutting of a shark's fins and discarding its carcass back into the ocean—is a rapidly growing problem that is directly responsible for huge increases in the number of sharks killed annually and appalling waste of this nation's living marine resources. The National Marine Fisheries Service has prohibited shark finning in the U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean. It is time to ban finning in the Pacific.

Between 1991 and 1998, the number of sharks "retained" by the Hawaii-based swordfish and tuna longline fleet jumped from 2,289 to 60,857 annually. In 1998, over 98 percent of these sharks were killed for their fins to meet the demand for shark fin soup. Because shark fins typically comprise only one to five percent of a shark's bodyweight, 95 to 99 percent of the shark is going to waste: Sharks are particularly vulnerable to overfishing because of their "life history characteristics"—slow growth, late sexual maturity, and the production of few young. Once depleted, a population may take decades to recover.

The National Marine Fisheries Service, conservationists, fishermen, scientists, and the public have pressured WESPAC to end the practice of shark finning. Nevertheless, WESPAC and the State of Hawaii recently failed to take action to end or control finning.

This issue of shark finning is characterized by a dangerous lack of management, rampant waste, and egregious inconsistencies with U.S. domestic and international policy stances. It is the most visible symptom of a larger problem: a lack of comprehensive management for sharks in U.S. Pacific waters. The history of poorly or unmanaged shark fisheries around the world is unequivocal: rapid decline followed by collapse. Sharks are not managed in U.S. Central and Western Pacific waters, and with increased fishing pressure there may be rapidly growing problems.

We urge your office to take whatever action is necessary to immediately end the destructive practice of shark finning in U.S. waters and encourage WESPAC to develop a comprehensive fishery management plan for sharks that will, among other things: 1. Immediately prohibit the finning of sharks; 2. Immediately reduce shark mortality levels by requiring the live release of all bycatch or "incidentally caught" animals brought to the boat alive; 3. Immediately reduce the bycatch of sharks; 4. Prevent overfishing by quickly establishing precautionary commercial and recreational quotas for sharks until a final comprehensive management plan is adopted that ensures the future health of the population. Given the dramatic increase in the number of sharks killed in the Hawaiian longline fishery, WESPAC should cap shark mortality at 1994 levels as a minimum interim action, pending the outcome of new population assessments.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

DAVID WILMOT, Ph.D.,
Ocean Wildlife Campaign.

CARL SAFINA, Ph.D.,
National Audubon Society.

LISA SPEER,
Natural Resources Defense Council.

TOM GRASSO,
World Wildlife Fund.

SONJA FORDHAM,
Center for Marine Conservation.

KEN HINMAN,
National Coalition for Marine Conservation.

ELLEN PIKITCH, Ph.D.,
Wildlife Conservation Society.

CENTER FOR MARINE CONSERVATION,
Washington, DC, September 22, 1999.

Hon. RANDY CUNNINGHAM,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE CUNNINGHAM: On behalf of the Center for Marine Conservation (CMC), I am writing to express our grave concern for Pacific sharks, specifically those under the jurisdiction of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (WESPAC). High demand for shark fin soup has driven a dramatic surge in shark finning (the practice of slicing off a shark's valuable fins and discarding the body at sea) by the Hawaiian longline fleet. This appalling waste of America's public marine resources is tied to alarming yet unrestricted increases in mortality of some of the ocean's most biologically vulnerable fish.

Shark conservation has long been a key element of CMC's fisheries program due in large part to the life history characteristics that leave sharks exceptionally susceptible to overfishing. In general, sharks grow slowly, mature late and produce a small number of young. Once depleted, shark populations often require decades to recover. In the U.S. Atlantic, for example, several overfished shark stocks will require four decades to rebuild to healthy levels, even with strict fishing controls. Indeed, nearly every large scale shark fishery this century has ended in collapse.

Off Hawaii, the number of sharks killed and brought to the dock (landed) has increased by more than 2500 percent, skyrocketing from just 2,289 sharks in 1991 to 60,857 sharks in 1998. In 1998, over 98 percent of these sharks were killed solely for their fins. Considering that shark fins typically comprise only one to five percent of a shark's bodyweight, 95 to 99 percent of the shark is going to waste.

CMC has been calling upon Western Pacific fishery managers to restrict shark fisheries and ban finning for more than five years. More recently, similar demands have been made by many other national conservation organizations as well as local Hawaiian environmental and fishing groups, international scientific societies, concerned citizens, and several Department of Commerce high-ranking officials. A recent poll by Seaweb found that finning was among the ocean issues most disturbing to the American public. Nevertheless, WESPAC and the State of Hawaii have yet to take action to control finning or limit shark mortality.

Shark finning in particular runs counter not only to the will of the American public, to which these resources belong, but also to

U.S. domestic and international policy as expressed in: The Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA); the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Sharks of the Atlantic Ocean; the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; and the FAO International Plan of Action for Sharks.

In addition, as you are likely aware, California is just one of many coastal states to ban finning within their waters.

In the U.S. Atlantic, the lucrative market for shark fins drove an intense fishery that led to severe depletion of several shark populations within less than ten years. Citing "universal and strong support" for a ban on finning on behalf of the non-fishing American public, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) banned the practice in U.S. Atlantic in 1993, stating that:

NMFS believes that finning is wasteful of valuable shark resources and poses a threat to attaining the conservation objectives of fishery management under the Magnuson Act.

This year, NMFS expanded the existing finning ban from the 39 regulated species to all sharks in the Atlantic while Department of Commerce officials have repeatedly, yet unsuccessfully, called upon WESPAC to halt finning.

In recent years, the United States has emerged as a world leader in crafting and promoting landmark, international agreements pertaining to sharks and continues to lead efforts to raise global awareness of their plight and special management needs. Yet, our inability to address an egregious finning problem within our own waters threatens to undermine the U.S. role in these important, international initiatives.

CMC asks for your assistance in ensuring an immediate end to the wasteful practice of finning, accompanied by a requirement that all incidentally-caught sharks brought to the boat alive be released alive. In addition, a comprehensive Pacific shark management plan that prevents overfishing and reduces bycatch is absolutely crucial to safeguarding these especially vulnerable animals; precautionary catch limits in the Western Pacific (no higher than 1994 mortality levels) are needed until such a plan is complete.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

SONJA V. FORDHAM,
Fisheries Project Manager.

IN HONOR OF RETIRING MAYOR
OF EASTPONTE, HARVEY CURLEY

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 27, 1999

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor one of my district's most beloved mayors, retiring City of Eastpointe Mayor Harvey Curley. Harvey is retiring after 23 years of holding elected office in Eastpointe.

Born in the small town of Minonok, Illinois, Harvey was first introduced to the public as the host of the Air Force Radio show "Music to Dawn". Upon his return from the military, he married Carole and settled in East Detroit, just as my family did, in the 1960's. A salesman by profession, Harvey was elected to the East Detroit School Board which became the foundation for his career at City Hall.

Harvey went on from his school board position to a brief two years on the East Detroit City Council, before being elected mayor in 1987. Harvey oversaw the city's name transition from East Detroit to Eastpointe. Balancing the city's old community roots with the younger generation's vision of the city's future proved no easy tasks. Under Harvey's guidance, the name change transition went smoothly and the city has gained a new sense of identity.

I have always looked forward to seeing Harvey at every event and civic function I have attended in Eastpointe, and plan on seeing him at many more. Though he may be retiring from office, Harvey will not be retiring from public life. While he will be missed at City Hall, he will continue to be an active part of the community he loves. He will surely remain active in his Baptist Church planning pancake breakfasts and working with the choir. Harvey will remain a friend of the city, either through the youth sports program at the new City Recreation Center or at the Eastpointe Senior Center, both of which he helped create.

Harvey Curley's tenure as mayor has seen Eastpointe through the decade of the 90's and he leaves the city well prepared for the coming century. Please join me in wishing Harvey and his lovely wife, Carole, a relaxing and enjoyable retirement.

TRIBUTE TO TEMPLE B'NAI
SHOLOM IN HUNTSVILLE, AL

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 27, 1999

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an institution in my district that has contributed substantially to the cultural, intellectual and religious enrichment of North Alabama, Temple B'nai Sholom. On November 12, the Congregation B'nai Sholom will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the dedication of its historic synagogue with a special Shabbat (Sabbath) service.

Thirty-two families came together in 1876 in Huntsville to form the Congregation and mobilized, dedicating their synagogue in 1899. I am proud to relay that Temple B'nai Sholom is the oldest synagogue in Alabama in continuous use. The Temple is also the only congregation affiliated with the Reform Movement in North Alabama and South Central Tennessee.

B'nai Sholom ("Sons of Peace"), the chosen name of the Temple, communicates the congregation's commitment to harmony and reconciliation. Temple B'nai Sholom has given to their community in countless ways. As members of the Interfaith Mission Service, the Temple contributes to the cause of religious tolerance in North Alabama. The Sisterhood of Temple B'nai Sholom should be commended for their efforts to raise money for breast cancer awareness and health initiatives through their design and sale of the L'Chaim pins. The Sisterhood designed the L'Chaim pin to symbolize Jewish support for breast cancer victims and survivors.

For a century, the Temple B'nai Sholom's commitment to the reform tradition has bol-

stered the religious community of North Alabama. Their established presence in downtown Huntsville is a testament to their perseverance and good will. I congratulate the Temple B'nai Sholom, and wish the Congregation a special centennial commemoration.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND ROBERT
NELSON, JR.

HON. MARION BERRY

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 27, 1999

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man who during his 19 years, has made many outstanding contributions to his community, Reverend Robert Nelson, Jr. Reverend Nelson, Jr. has served as pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church West Memphis, Arkansas for 19 years. Through his ministry at Bethel, he has been able to establish the Bethel Christian Outreach Center which aides the people of the community with substance abuse problems. He also administers the Bethel Learning Academy, a childcare facility setup to target high school drop outs, low to moderate income families and children with special needs.

Along with his work for the church and the community, Reverend Nelson, Jr. also served his country. He is a three year army veteran who courageously fought in the Vietnam War. When he returned home from his service in Vietnam, he helped establish the Crosstown Fellowship in Crittenden County which holds services in the community every second Sunday. This ministry has helped several hundred families with housing and utilities expenses.

Reverend Robert Nelson, Jr. is the recipient of several awards such as the Arkansas Certificate of Merit for his outstanding service to the people of Arkansas while serving on the Governor's Arkansas Highway Safety Advisory Council. He has received several awards of appreciation from President Bill Clinton, Mayor Al Boals of West Memphis, the General Assembly, former Governor Guy Tucker, the NAACP and others.

Reverend Nelson is also a family man, who cherishes his family including his wife Mrs. Rita Wilson; four children, Marty Green, Ryan Nelson, Rashunda Nelson and Rachel Nelson; and two granddaughters, Renea Nelson and Raylyn Nelson.

When I think of someone we all should strive to be like, I think of Reverend Nelson. Through all his hard work for his country and his community and all the awards he has received, Reverend Nelson continues to be a wonderful, down to earth man who takes pride in his love of people and his love of God.

TRIBUTE TO HOWARD J.
RUBENSTEIN ON THE 45TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF RUBENSTEIN ASSO-
CIATES

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 27, 1999

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the extraordinary talents and contributions of Howard J. Rubenstein. This evening, some two thousand government, civic, and corporate leaders will celebrate the 45th anniversary of Mr. Rubenstein's firm, Rubenstein Associates, Inc.

Howard Rubenstein has been dubbed by Newsweek Magazine as the "Dean of Damage Control", one of America's foremost public relations consultants. His clients constitute a cross section of influential individuals and organizations, from Disney/ABC to novelist Danielle Steel, from the New York Yankees to the Duchess of York. Rubenstein's brilliance, insights, and innovative strategies have earned him great respect in the United States and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, my profound admiration for Howard Rubenstein is a consequence not of his public relations skills, but rather of his passionate commitment to using his talents for the benefit of his community and his country. His public service has affected a sweeping range of civic and cultural priorities. Mr. Rubenstein is currently an advisor to the New York City Commission on the Status of Women, and he is a member of the City University of New York Business Advisory Board, the board of directors of the Center for Democracy, and the Inner-City Scholarship Fund of the Archdiocese of New York.

Howard has also served on the Mayor's Committee on Business & Economic Development for New York Mayors Abraham Beame, David Dinkins, and Rudolph Giuliani, and he is currently a trustee of the Alliance for the Arts, the March of Dimes New York Chapter, the Central Park Conservancy, and the Police Athletic League. In an era when business leaders all too often fail to demonstrate a devotion to the needs of our society, Howard Rubenstein's contributions stand as a model for all others.

Mr. Speaker, one particular episode stands out in my reflection upon Howard Rubenstein's service to his community. In 1991, the Brooklyn community of Crown Heights exploded in a chain reaction of violence, riots, and ever-mounting divisions between the area's African-American and Hasidic Jewish populations. These disputes divided the city and received national attention, emphasizing the difficulties of racial reconciliation. Responding to a request for his assistance from Mayor David Dinkins and other city leaders, Rubenstein undertook the difficult task of diffusing the tensions between African-Americans and Jews.

He organized a "Peace Conference" in Crown Heights, and then planned a special "Neighbor to Neighbor" event at the Apollo Theater in Harlem. More than 1,300 people—both Jews and African-Americans—viewed a showing of "The Liberators," a film which depicts the liberation of Nazi concentration camps by African-American soldiers. The