

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 376

Introduced by Assembly Members Fong and Huffman

February 14, 2011

An act to add Section 2021 to the Fish and Game Code, relating to sharks.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 376, as introduced, Fong. Shark fins.

Existing law makes it unlawful to possess any bird, mammal, fish, reptile, or amphibian, or parts thereof, taken in violation of any of the provisions of the Fish and Game Code, or of any regulation made under it.

This bill, except as specified, would make it unlawful for any person to possess, sell, offer for sale, trade, or distribute a shark fin, as defined.

The bill, by creating a new crime, would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

1 (a) Sharks, or elasmobranchs, are critical to the health of the
2 ocean ecosystem.

3 (b) Sharks are particularly susceptible to decline due to
4 overfishing because they are slow to reach reproductive maturity
5 and birth small litters, and cannot rebuild their populations quickly
6 once they are overfished.

7 (c) Sharks occupy the top of the marine food chain. Their decline
8 is an urgent problem that upsets the balance of species in ocean
9 ecosystems and negatively affects other fisheries. It constitutes a
10 serious threat to the ocean ecosystem and biodiversity.

11 (d) The practice of shark finning, where a shark is caught, its
12 fins cut off, and the carcass dumped back into the water, causes
13 tens of millions of sharks to die each year. Sharks starve to death,
14 may be slowly eaten by other fish, or drown because most sharks
15 need to keep moving to force water through their gills for oxygen.

16 (e) Data from federal and international agencies show a decline
17 in shark populations worldwide.

18 (f) California is a market for shark fin and this demand helps
19 drive the practice of shark finning. The market also drives shark
20 declines. By impacting the demand for shark fins, California can
21 help ensure that sharks do not become extinct as a result of shark
22 finning.

23 (g) Shark fin often contains high amounts of mercury, which
24 has been proven dangerous to consumers' health.

25 SEC. 2. Section 2021 is added to the Fish and Game Code, to
26 read:

27 2021. (a) As used in this section "shark fin" means the raw,
28 dried, or otherwise processed detached fin, or the raw, dried, or
29 otherwise processed detached tail, of an elasmobranch.

30 (b) It shall be unlawful for any person to possess, sell, offer for
31 sale, trade, or distribute a shark fin.

32 (c) This section does not apply to any person who holds a license
33 or permit pursuant to Section 1002 and who possesses a shark fin
34 or fins consistent with that license or permit.

35 (d) This section does not apply to any person who holds a license
36 or permit issued by the department to take or land sharks for
37 recreational or commercial purposes and who possesses a shark
38 fin or fins consistent with that license or permit.

39 SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to
40 Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because

1 the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school
2 district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or
3 infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty
4 for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of
5 the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within
6 the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California
7 Constitution.

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