

## Assembly Bill No. 376

### CHAPTER 524

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

[Approved by Governor October 7, 2011. Filed with  
Secretary of State October 7, 2011.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 376, 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(b) Except as otherwise provided in subdivisions (c), (d), and (e), it shall be unlawful for any person to possess, sell, offer for sale, trade, or distribute a shark fin.

(c) Any person who holds a license or permit pursuant to Section 1002 may possess a shark fin or fins consistent with that license or permit.

(d) Any person who holds a license or permit issued by the department to take or land sharks for recreational or commercial purposes may possess a shark fin or fins consistent with that license or permit.

(e) Before January 1, 2013, any restaurant may possess, sell, offer for sale, trade, or distribute a shark fin possessed by that restaurant, as of January 1, 2012, that is prepared for consumption.

SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.