

To Mayor Corrigan and Council Members;

Please accept this letter as an introduction to our club and the cause we have dedicated much of our time to in effort to raise awareness of the state of the shark population and the importance of protecting our oceans and respecting our natural resources. We are passionate about doing our part to preserve our beautiful home so that future generations can continue to enjoy our pristine natural world.

Following are some facts we have gathered to provide a background for our sense of urgency in this matter. We hope you will see that this is an issue that demands immediate attention in order to prevent future disaster. We are teaching our schoolmates that the environment is a living entity that deserves to be respected, just as we respect our classmates and community members. In doing this, we have seen a change from isolated learners to communities who actively care for each other and for the space they work in. We hope you agree that this basic empathy for one's surroundings is the foundation for building healthy and thriving communities. Understanding this, we see that this cause goes beyond simply saving the sharks or stopping the pipeline, and begins a paradigm shift to a generation that places the wellbeing of the community first.

Reasons for a Provincial ban on the SALE (not import) of shark fin

- **Shark populations around the world are plummeting due to harvesting fins. Sharks, the apex predators of the oceans have survived 400 million years. Over 100 million sharks are killed every year, finned, and their bodies discarded to die a 3 day painful death on the ocean floor.**
- **Most shark species are apex predators and are necessary to maintain ocean ecosystems that millions of people around the world depend on for food. We need sharks for a healthy ocean eco system. Sharks are essential to maintain a critical balance and the health of our oceans.**

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City Manager
Dir. Finance
Dir. Planning & Building

- **Sharks do not have the reproductive biology to be able to rebound from such huge population losses as they reproduce very slowly. In fact 90% of the sharks are gone! Time is running out for the world's shark populations. When sharks are eliminated, disastrous effects have been documented further down the food chain, including the collapse of commercial fisheries and the degradation of coral reefs. If sharks were to become extinct, this would have massive unintended consequences for our ocean ecosystems worldwide.**
- **The UBCM motion from Sept 2012 unanimously supported a provincial ban on the sale of shark fin.**
- **The Federal government did not pass a ban on the import of shark fin, citing the conflict with Canadian dogfish fisheries that are monitored by the federal government, and that existing legislation and regulations (prohibition of CITES endangered species) was being implemented and being increased. However, recent DNA tests on shark fin bought in Richmond show that fins from endangered shark species are being sold, such as the great hammerhead shark.**
- **The Federal government will not (along with Japan and Norway) even implement the 2014 CITES regulations on the trade of critically endangered sharks.**
- **The Federal Environment Ministry and CFIA have both admitted that shark fin entering Canada is not tested and they have no plans to test it in the future.**
- **Many countries that export shark fin cannot be trusted to be truthful about the source of fins- Costa Rica for example banned finning last year but were recently caught giving export licenses to Indonesia for Great hammerhead fins- critically endangered.**
- **Some restaurants have introduced imitation shark fin soup at a reduced price with the ingredients for the fin actually made out of crab meat, for those customers who do not want to be part of the horrific practice of shark finning and who worry about the high levels of mercury found in sharks. Pregnant women are warned to never eat any shark because of the mercury in it.**

- Extensive support from Chinese communities in Richmond, Vancouver Chinatown and Victoria has been demonstrated with Fin Free stickers being publicly displayed in windows of many businesses.
- Huge numbers of citizens of BC have put their names on a petition to have the sale of shark fin banned in BC. The number is growing weekly.
- The only way to stop finning world wide is to stop the consumption not import- it is easy to enforce and with no demand there is no supply. Even the Chinese government has acknowledged this.
- The situation has become so dire that China has decided to ban Shark Fin Soup at official state banquets. In the USA California, Oregon, Hawaii and New York have introduced state-wide bans on shark fins, with more states in the process of introducing bans.
- In 2009 Polly Higgins, UK barrister and activist, began a campaign calling on the United Nations to adopt a law recognizing mass destruction of ecosystems as a 5th international crime against peace- a crime of Ecocide. Ecocide is defined as: "The extensive destruction, damage to or loss of ecosystems of a given territory, whether by human agency or by other causes, to such an extent that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants of that territory has been severely diminished." Founded upon a duty of care to the planet, this crime against peace would be of strict liability and binding on all-even those States who are not signed up to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Mining, fossil fuel extraction (e.g. TAR SANDS in Alberta, Canada) and deforestation could be classified as Ecocide. More than 10 countries have already recognized a form of Ecocide in their national laws.

- **In Rob Stewart's (Toronto filmmaker & environmentalist) films "Sharkwater" and "Revolution" we learned that Bolivia's constitution gave Rights to Mother Earth and Ecuador's constitution became the first in the world to codify the rights of nature and specifically sumac kawsay. Rights-of-nature ordinances are now being passed in communities in the United States, Peru and parts of Mexico have also given rights to Earth. In the films we saw something very inspiring, Grade 6 students on the Island of Saipan had stopped shark finning and Grade 7 students on the Island of Guam had also done the same and banned shark finning.**

We are in Grade 8 and we are working to help stop shark finning in Burnaby. All of our members have fond memories of playing in the beaches at Stanley Park and being treated with a visit to the Vancouver aquarium. If these oceans are destroyed generations after us will not be able to enjoy a childhood filled with the adventure and fun.

We have done a Skype call with Deirdre Moore at Byrne Creek Community School where we exchanged information with science students from Glenlyon School in Victoria. We are all inspired by the work of Felix Finkbeiner of Germany who has developed his own foundation "Plant for the Planet", which has planted 1 million trees in Germany and is now moving to planting trees all over the world.

We see that small groups of dedicated individuals can make a difference, and so we want to propose that Burnaby give Mother Earth rights so we can protect our community, choosing our responsibility to the seventh generation over quarterly earnings, regeneration over economic growth, and the pursuit of wellbeing and harmony over wealth and financial success. We want to join in solidarity with all those who are defending Mother Earth and directly calling for global action to stop climate change. We propose the development of life. The idea of stewardship is even too small, because it's really just the opposite. Mother Earth is totally taking care of us. Mother Earth is not an "IT, she is a living Being. The Universe is a web of interrelationships. Chief Seattle said "Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does in the web, he does to himself".

We want to strengthen the human family for the next seven generations. Please help us to preserve the world's vital oceans by banning the sale and distribution of shark fins, and shark fin products in Burnaby and nationwide. We are sending a message to you to act immediately and decisively to shift human civilization onto a sustainable course.

Yours truly-

The Students of the Shark Fin Free
Art Club, Byrne Creek Community
School

President: Hamdi Qussim, gr. 8

[REDACTED] |
[REDACTED]

Will not be attending

Vice-President: Aya Hawili gr. 8

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Will not be attending

Jessica Lusuegro gr. 12 is back up
for presenting if Heather can't come.

Secretary, will be presenting

Heather Fisher gr. 8

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Club Presenter: Maya Arradaza gr. 8

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sponsor Teachers: Ms. Judy McLeod

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

& Ms. Taryn MacDonald, Coast
Salish

[REDACTED]
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