



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Mark Grisanti

Grisanti-Sponsored Legislation That Prohibits The Sale, Possession And Distribution Of Shark Fins Signed Into Law

MARK GRISANTI July 26, 2013

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Buffalo legislator led push to make it illegal to possess, sell or distribute shark fins in New York

Senator Mark Grisanti (R, I-60) today applauded the signing of legislation he sponsored in the Senate that makes it illegal to possess, sell or distribute a shark fin in New York State.

As chairman of the Senate's Environmental Conservation Committee, Grisanti said he was pleased to sponsor a bill that he says will help preserve an important species of our ecosystem.

"With this new law now on the books, sharks will be able to live in a stable environment in the ocean," Senator Grisanti said. "New York is doing its part to help prevent the killing of sharks to supply the growing global demand for their fins."

Under current law, it is illegal to "fin" a shark in New York waters, a practice where a shark is caught, its fin removed, and then returned to open waters. A finned shark, unable to swim or pass water across its gills, eventually dies from suffocation or blood loss. The fins are the main ingredient in shark fin soup, a traditional Asian dish.

The legislation draws attention to the growing global demand for shark fins and helps to provide a fair balance between the market for this ingredient and the need to protect sharks by allowing the sale of shark fins for two specific species of dogfish, which is the most abundant shark species in the North Atlantic Ocean. It also has an exception for shark fins that will be earmarked and later used strictly for educational purposes.

There are 70 commercial fishers currently licensed to catch dogfish, with daily catch limits of 3,000 pounds for each licensee. Dogfish are mostly exported to England, where they are the preferred fish for the British staple "fish and chips," while their fins are exported to Asia. New York joins other states which had previously prohibited the sale of shark fins with exceptions related to dogfish, including California, Illinois, Oregon and Washington.

"Shark finning has decimated the shark population worldwide," Senator Grisanti said. "I am proud that New York is now joining other states in taking a stand against this practice by banning the possession, sale and trade of shark fins. The new law will have a major impact on this cruel industry by removing New York, which is currently a major East Coast importer, from the shark fin trade."

Grisanti previously sponsored legislation two years ago to ban the sale of bear gallbladders, which are used for medicinal purposes in some cultures