



**Statement of
Jo-Anne R Basile
Executive Director, Connecticut Votes for Animals
in Support of HB-5251
Joint Committee on the Environment
February 15, 2019**

Chairs Cohen and Demicco and Members of the Environment Committee:

Connecticut Votes for Animals represents 3,000 residents across the state and its members have expressed strong support for Connecticut's participation in ending the cruel and heinous practice of shark finning. Accordingly, CVA strongly supports HB-5251, a bill to Prohibit the Possession and Trade of Shark Fins.

In "finning", a living shark's fins are cut off, where after it's thrown back into the water to die a painful and untimely death. This grisly practice is driven by the cheapest and most profitable way to meet the demand for shark fins, mostly for soup. Although finning is prohibited by federal law, it is impossible to determine whether the fins entering the US market are coming from legal and sustainable practices and so fins sold in the U.S. may be the result of finning and even derived from endangered species.

Sharks are critical to a healthy ecosystem. Yet they are vulnerable to overfishing and the practice of finning further exacerbates the threat of extinction to these ancient creatures. By passing the proposed legislation as amended, Connecticut can join other states, including our neighbors in MA, NY, NH and RI who have enacted similar bans to increase the protection of the species and removing the incentive for a global shark fin trade.

CVA thanks the Committee for the opportunity to present our position and urges the Environment Committee to favorably consider HB-5251 and make Connecticut a partner in the global effort to eliminate the trade and sale of shark fins.