



Monterey Bay
Aquarium®



OCEANA

April 18, 2022

Betty T. Yee, State Controller, Chair
Eleni Kounalakis, Lieutenant Governor, Member
Keely Bosler, Director of Department of Finance, Member
California State Lands Commission
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100 South
Sacramento CA 95825

RE: Support for Assembly Bill 2109 (Bennett) to ban use of attractants for white sharks (Item 64, April 26, 2022 meeting)

Dear Chair Yee, Lt Gov Kounalakis, and Director Bosler,

Monterey Bay Aquarium, Oceana, and the California Fish and Game Wardens Supervisors and Managers Association all support AB 2109, Assemblymember Bennett's bill to ban the use of any bait, lure, or chum to attract any white shark in California waters. We urge the State Lands Commission to support this important ocean protection legislation.

White sharks, also called great white sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*), are the earth's largest ocean predatory fish and fascinating creatures to many. Yet white sharks remain one of the least understood ocean animals despite the enormous public and scientific interest in them. White sharks are widely distributed around the world, mostly in cold, temperate waters. They prefer areas with sea surface temperatures of 50 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit. White sharks are commonly seen at the ocean surface and juvenile white sharks are frequently seen in shallow nearshore waters off Southern California, especially in the summer and during warm water periods. They are increasingly found in Monterey Bay due to warming ocean waters caused by climate change.¹

With increased sightings comes increased interest and the public has become more aware of their presence, further increasing the potential for human-shark interactions. We understand that some individuals are running white shark viewing tours by boat and have requested to use attractants for cage diving operations in areas with an abundance of both white sharks and ocean users, potentially putting other members of the public at risk. To increase the likelihood of successful viewing, boat operators may attempt to use some form of attractant (chum, bait,

¹ Tanaka, K.R., Van Houtan, K.S., Mailander, E. *et al.* North Pacific warming shifts the juvenile range of a marine apex predator. *Sci Rep* 11, 3373 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-82424-9>

decoy, etc.) to bring white sharks near the vessel. Prohibiting this practice will protect both white sharks and the public, while keeping this important natural ocean predator wild.

Thank you for your leadership and for supporting efforts to protect white sharks, public safety, and improve the management of all of California's remarkable marine resources.

Sincerely,

Amy Wolfrum
California Ocean Policy Senior Manager
Monterey Bay Aquarium

Danny Stevenson
President
California Fish and Game Wardens Supervisors and Managers Association

Geoff Shester, Ph.D.
California Campaign Director and Senior Scientist
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cc: The Honorable Steve Bennett
Sheri Pemberton, California State Lands Commission
Jennifer Fearing, Fearless Advocacy

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April 20, 2022

California State Lands Commission
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Commission Members:

I am requesting the California State Lands Commission's (SLC) support for AB 2109, which would prohibit the use of bait or animal decoys for the purpose of attracting or viewing white sharks.

Recently, an unprecedented number of juvenile white sharks are present in the warm, shallow coastal waters off Southern California. Naturally, the public is interested in seeing these incredible creatures – often up close. White shark viewing tours operators have requested to use attractants for cage diving and boat viewing operations. Unfortunately, these tours are often in areas with an abundance of both white sharks and ocean users, potentially putting members of the public at risk. In the past 52 years, there have only been 202 reported shark/human incidents, and we do not want that number to rise – further risking both species.

AB 2109 appropriately authorizes the Department of Fish and Wildlife to enforce the unlawful to use any bait, lure, or chum to attract white sharks.

I respectfully request SLC's support of AB 2109.

Sincerely,

STEVE BENNETT
Assemblymember, 37th District