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ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN OCEAN HARMONY ALLIANCE

Mission

The Asian Pacific American Ocean Harmony Alliance (“APAOHA” – rhymes with “ALOHA”) was created to represent Asian Pacific Americans (APAs) who support the proposed legislation to ban the sale, trade, possession and distribution of shark fin. Similar legislation to ban shark fin has recently been successfully signed into law in Hawaii and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands. The growing demand for shark fin soup threatens the existence of sharks and will upset the balance of healthy ocean and marine ecosystems and leave our children and grandchildren with a world that is less healthy.

Who We Are

Because individuals are not listed in support of legislation as part of the state legislative process and there is no existing state APA organization that advocates on environmental conservation, the Asian Pacific American Ocean Harmony Alliance was created to represent the numerous respected APA community leaders and advocates that support the ban on shark fin. Prominent APA chefs, artists, activists, scholars and elected officials have already joined this cause.

What We Believe

Thousands of years of established Chinese philosophy emphasizes the importance of preserving harmony between humanity and nature. The Chinese idiom “*tian ren he yi*” (天人合一) that respectively means nature, human beings, mutual understanding and friendship, and oneness exemplifies the deep cultural significance of conservation to the Chinese.

Furthermore, Chinese religious beliefs do not support the unchecked consumption of shark fin. Approximately 30% of the Chinese in China are Taoists who believe in compassion, moderation and humility and the importance of nature. Approximately 20% of the Chinese in China are Buddhists that believe that suffering is caused by craving. Another 4% of Chinese are Christian and 2% Muslim with no connection of shark fin consumption to core religious beliefs or traditions.

Although shark fin soup has been a customary Chinese entree for years because of its association with prestige and privilege, the APA community must help reduce the consumption of shark fin in order to protect the ocean ecosystem that keeps our environment in balance. A number of globally recognized APA chefs support alternatives to shark fin and APAs that want to enjoy premium quality seafood have many sustainable alternatives to choose from. Even the prestigious Pacific Palms Resort in the heart of Los Angeles’ largest Chinese American community has discontinued serving shark fin soup.

Therefore it is imperative for Asian Pacific Americans concerned about protecting the Earth’s natural resources to speak up in support of the ban on shark fin. As such, we are proud to work with environmental organizations that include the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the Humane Society of the United States, Heal the Bay, Oceana, Natural Resources Defense Council, and WildAid on this important issue.