



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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January 19, 2022

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Natural Resources - Wildlife Trafficking Prohibition - HB 52 – Support

Chairman Barve, Vice Chairman Stein, members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland, and in this case, beyond. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across the State of Maryland, I respectfully ask that the House Environment & Transportation Committee vote favorably for HB 52.

Maryland is no stranger to taking a stand to protect a species from these activities. In 2013, Maryland was the first state on the East Coast to pass a law banning shark finning. That law, sponsored by then Senator Bryan Frosh, bans the possession, sale, trade and distribution of shark fins. Currently, fourteen other states and three US territories ban that brutal practice. It is time for Maryland to take a similar step forward, not only to protect sharks as we did in 2013, but also to protect these 18 endangered or threatened species whose numbers dwindle precipitously in the face of rapidly expanding illegal poaching.

Federal law bans trafficking of these parts between states, but not within each state. With laws against trafficking parts or pieces having passed recently in New York and Washington DC, these activities will migrate to the closest states that allow these activities, such as Maryland. Baltimore is a certified antiques port, so with New York and Washington DC banning these sales we know that it is putting pressure on Maryland and our port as these illegal items are coming here. It's time to close this loophole so that we can protect these species.

I would like to thank Delegate Love for sponsoring this bill and urge a favorable report for HB 52.