

July 13, 2020

The Honourable Bernadette Jordan
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard
200 Kent Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6



Dear Minister:

On behalf of the Shark League, a non-profit coalition dedicated to science-based conservation of inherently vulnerable sharks, we write to express our gratitude for Canada's adherence and promotion of scientific advice for protecting endangered Atlantic shortfin makos, as well as our hope that this much needed leadership will continue with resubmission of Canada's proposal for science-based mako catch limits by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

More specifically, we applaud your government for heeding ICCAT scientists' recommendation to completely prohibit retention of severely overfished North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks. The domestic ban that Canada implemented earlier this year clearly demonstrates a commitment to responsible, science-based mako management. This action serves as a crucial example for other countries and enhances the chances of achieving our shared goal of complementary action by ICCAT.

We remain impressed by the efforts of the Canadian delegation, in concert with Senegal and with the support of fourteen other countries, to secure science-based mako limits at the ICCAT 2019 annual meeting. ICCAT's failure to reach consensus on that proposal is increasingly distressing as COVID-19 complications have impeded plans for establishing international mako limits. In the meantime, other countries are continuing to overfish makos. We argue that this situation calls for immediate attention, despite the challenges of negotiating during a pandemic.

Based on these factors, we respectfully request that your government, by the end of this month, once again propose a North Atlantic-wide mako ban for ICCAT action this year. We are eager to work with Canada and other Parties to ensure progress in the coming weeks toward this urgent need.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Shannon Arnold
Ecology Action Centre



Sonja Fordham
Shark Advocates Int'l



Ali Hood
Shark Trust



Ian Campbell
Project AWARE



cc: Sylvie Lapointe, Assistant Deputy Minister, Fisheries and Harbour Management
Derrick Millburn, Senior Policy Analyst - International Fisheries Management

Our groups formed the Shark League with funding from the Shark Conservation Fund. More information at www.sharkleague.org.