A BILL FOR AN ACT

To further amend section 913 of title 24 of the Code of the Federated States of Micronesia (Annotated), as amended by Public Laws Nos. 18-108 and 19-21, in order to clarify that sharks caught as by-catch are to be safely released back into the water, and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA:

Section 1. Section 913 of title 24 of the Code of the Federated States of Micronesia (Annotated), as amended by Public Laws Nos. 18-108 and 19-21, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

“Section 913. Possession, handling and sale of fish, shark, or shark fin, unlawfully taken.

(1) No person shall knowingly and intentionally capture, ship, transport, offer for sale, sell, purchase, import, export or have custody, control or possession of any fish taken or retained in contravention of this subtitle or any access agreement, permit or applicable law except as defined in this section.

(2) It shall be unlawful for fishing vessels to remove shark fins from sharks on board fishing vessels, and to retain on board, transship or land sharks or shark fins, subject to subsections (4) and (6).

(3) It shall be unlawful for fishing vessels to
possess wire leaders, steel trace, or wire trace.

(4) All sharks caught by a fishing vessel shall be either:

(a) if still alive, [immediately] safely released back into the ocean. Fishing vessels must ensure that sharks are released whole, and that sharks are not unnecessarily harmed during the release process; or

(b) if dead, may either be landed as a transshipment port in the Federated States of Micronesia, recorded in the daily catch report form for the vessel and discarded. Fishing vessels must ensure that sharks are landed whole with all shark fins attached to the carcass. Any sharks caught as by-catch should be handled in the above manner.

(5) It shall be unlawful to purchase, offer for sale or sell sharks or shark parts, including shark fins which have been removed on board a vessel, transshipped or landed in contravention of this section.

(6) Any person who holds a license or permit from the Authority to conduct scientific research on sharks and carries out activities in accordance with that license or permit shall not be held in contravention of this section.

(7) Any person who intentionally and knowingly
commits an act in violation of this section shall be
subject to a civil penalty of not less than $50,000 and
to more than $250,000.

(8) It shall be a rebuttable presumption that any
sharks caught or shark fins possessed by a fishing
vessel fishing in the EEZ of the Federated States of
Micronesia, originated from the EEZ of the Federated
States of Micronesia.

(9) All shark or shark fins seized and forfeited
shall be destroyed by incineration."

Section 2. This act shall become law upon approval by the
President of the Federated States of Micronesia or upon its
becoming law without such approval.

Date: 8/18/20

Introduced by: /s/ Florencio S. Harper

Florencio S. Harper (by request)