Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 306

Introduced by **HON. LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR., HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE, HON. TSUYOSHI ANTHONY G. HORIBATA AND HON. NICOLAS ENCISO VIII**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The bill proposes the urgent and blanket protection of sharks and rays found within our territorial waters by criminalizing and penalizing the hunting, killing, harassment, and finning of these creatures. As of the moment, our laws provide for the protection of our wildlife resources and their habitats[1], prohibition of unregulated and unreported fishing[2], and specifically safeguard only two out of the 200 species of sharks found in our waters – the whale shark and the great white shark.

This Representation believes that our laws are grossly insufficient in defending these creatures from unhindered and wholesale slaughter as concerned groups report that between 70 to 100 million sharks are killed every year for their liver, meat and their fins. These figures are beyond alarming considering that mature sharks and rays only have one to two pups per year, and take some 10 years to mature.

It is incumbent upon our country, fortunately located just right above the equator and along the migratory route of these majestic animals, to take steps to ensure that every species of sharks and rays that call our waters their home are safe and healthy.

Sharks and rays are some of the grandest and most misunderstood animals in the planet. While they are often portrayed by the media as voracious killers, they serve a crucial role in maintaining a balanced ecosystem underwater. They are carnivorous creatures that feed on smaller fishes and planktons. Due to their size, they consume a big amount of prey, placing them on top of the food chain. Sharks also prefer to prey on injured or dying animals, naturally cleansing the fish population of its weak members[3]. The absence of these animals in the water, or a significant

[1] RA 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001
[2] RA 10654 or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 *as amended*
[3] https://www.oceanicresearch.org/education/films/sharkspt.html

decline in their populations, will definitely disrupt the food web as it will result in the sudden ballooning of other fish populations, triggering a wave of unfortunate consequences.

Sharks and rays have also proven to be more financially valuable alive than dead. The case of Malapascua Island inspires us all the more to spare no effort in ensuring that these animals live. After the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, the small island of Malapascua suprisingly recovered with the help of thresher sharks. Thresher sharks are highly migratory long-tailed creatures that host external parasites. They have found the reefs near Malapascua Island, like the Monad Shoal, excellent "cleaning stations" where they can rub the parasites off while feasting on the healthy population of sardines found in the area. The natural phenomenon has brought hundreds of divers to the island to witness this marvel, and in turn, provided consistent livelihood to the residents[4].

These sharks and rays have existed for some 300 million years. They have been gracing and enjoying the waters of the Earth even before the earliest humans, as discovered, lived. It is the ardent hope and desire of this bill to make sure that they continue to do so- healthily, abundantly, and freely.

In consideration of the foregoing premises, the passage of this bill is urgently sought.

LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.

MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE

TSUYOSHI ANTHONY G. HORIBATA

NICOLAS ENCISO VIII

[4] http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20161107-sharks-are-helping-the-philippines-recover-from-a-typhoon

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AN ACT
REGULATING THE CATCHING, SALE, PURCHASE, POSSESSION, TRANSPORTATION, IMPORTATION, AND EXPORTATION OF ALL SHARKS, RAYS, AND CHIMAERAS AND ANY PART THEREOF IN THE COUNTRY

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. ***Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the "Shark Conservation Act of the Philippines."

SECTION. 2. ***Declaration of Policy.*** **–** It is hereby declared the policies of the State to:

a) Protect environmental rights of the people, promote conservation and ensure sustainable and equitable utilization of its coastal areas, habitats and species, including sharks, in conformity with the Constitution, the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, as amended by Republic Act 10654, and the National Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act;

b) Ensure, for the benefit and enjoyment of the Filipino people, the judicious and wise utilization, protection, conservation and management on a sustainable basis of its coastal and fishery resources with the necessity of maintaining

sound ecological balance and protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment;

c) Protect the rights of the small and marginal fishers in the preferential use of the communal coastal and fishery resources;

d) Allow people's full and active participation in the conservation and management of the coastal and fishery resources and promote awareness of sustainable fisheries through appropriate education and training;

e) Promote and adhere to the precautionary principle of conservation, management and exploitation of living and coastal and fishery resources in order to assure the sustainable development of the coastal environment. Th absence of adequate scientific and technical information should not be used as reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures; and

f) Promote ecosystem-based fisheries management.

SECTION. 3. ***Scope of Application.*** – The provisions of this Act shall be enforceable for all Philippine waters including other waters over which the Philippines has sovereignty and jurisdiction, and the country's 200- nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf, including protected areas under Republic Act No. 7586, otherwise known as the National Integrated Areas System (NIPAS) Act; critical habitats; and all Philippine flagged fishing vessels operating in areas governed by the Regional Fisheries Management Organization, in high seas, or in waters of other coastal states.

SECTION. 4. ***Jurisdiction of Department of Agriculture.*** – The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall have jurisdiction over sharks, rays, and chimaeras, and all declared aquatic habitats. In the Province of Palawan, jurisdiction herein conferred is vested to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development pursuant to Republic Act No. 7611.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Department of Agriculture (DA-BFAR) shall be the lead agency in the implementation of this Act. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Philippine Coast Guard, the Philippine National Police (PNP_, other law enforcement agencies, and Local Government Units (LGU) shall likewise assist in the implementation of this Act.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) shall provide the necessary assistance to the DA-BFAR and the LGUs in identifying shark ecotourism sites and declare the same as protected.

CHAPTER II
DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION. 5. ***Definition of Terms.*** **–** For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined:

a) "By-catch" means the incidental take of undesirable size or age classes of the target species, or the incidental take of other non-target species or protected, endangered, or threatened species.

b) "By-product or derivatives" means any part taken or substance extracted from sharks, in raw or in processed form This includes, but are not limited to, preserved sharks, (curios), cartilage, gill rakers, fins, oils, and teeth;

c) "Corridor" means any artificial or natural venue where wide-ranging animals can travel, plants can propagate, genetic interchange can occur, populations can move in response to environmental changes and natural disasters, and threatened species can be replenished from other areas. Marine corridors encompass mangroves, coral reefs, and seagrass beds;

d) "Critical Habitat" means a place or environment that contains physical or biological features essential to its conservation;

e) "Dedicated tourism interaction site" means well-defined areas for marine wildlife tourism, either managed as a sanctuary/reserve/protected area or not, focused on a particular species or several species, with specified operating times;

f) "Discarded by-catch" means non-target species that are discarded at sea;

g) "Disturbance' means any intentional and unintentional acts that shall disrupt the natural cycle and activities of marine wildlife for the short or long-term without necessarily causing any physical injury to the same such as but it's not limited to acts producing noise, pollution, degradation of habitat, blockage of movement, displacement, and the like;

h) "Endangered Rare and/or Threatened Shark Species" means species in danger of extinction as provided for in existing Philippine laws and/or the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List of Species;

i) "Finning" means the practice of removing and retaining shark fins;

j) "Full utilization" means use or consumption of the entire animal;

k) "Habitat" means place or environment where species or subspecies naturally occurs or has naturally established its population;

l) "Harassment" means an intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering;

m) "Non-dedicated Tourism Interaction Site" means opportunistic, accidental or unintentional interaction with marine wildlife tourism and non-tourism sites;

n) "Non-detriment Funding" (NDF) means a science-based risk assessment where the vulnerability of a species is considered in relation to how well it is managed;

o) "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture;

p) "Shark" means cartilaginous fishes belonging to the class Chondrichthyes, which includes true sharks, skates, rays and chimaeras;

q) "Shark sanctuary" means a designated area where sharks cannot be caught;

r) "Traceability" means the ability to trace and follow food or a substance intended to be or expected to be incorporated into a food or product through all stages of fishing, production, processing, and distribution;

s) "Trade" means the act of engaging in the exchange, exportation, importation, re-exportation, purchase, or sale of sharks, their derivatives, or by-products, locally or internationally;

t) "Utilized by-catch" means non-target species that are traded or consumed, in part or whole.

CHAPTER III
CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF SHARKS, RAYS, AND CHIMAERAS

ARTICLE I
General Provisions

SECTION. 6. ***Information Systems, Interaction, Release and Possession of By-Products and Derivatives, and By-catch.***

a) *Wildlife Information.* All activities, subsequently manifested under this Chapter, shall be authorized by the Secretary upon proper evaluation of best available information or scientific data showing that the activity is, or for a purpose, not detrimental to the survival of the species or subspecies involved and/or their habitat. For this purpose, the Secretary shall regularly update wildlife information through research.

b) *Sharks in Captivity.* No person or entity shall be allowed possession of sharks unless such person or entity can prove financial capability and facility to maintain said species: *Provided,* That the source was not obtained in violation of this Act, and the source of stock is verifiable to monitor mortality. The DA-BFAR will develop husbandry and holding tank standards as well as permitting system for the keeping of sharks in captivity.

c) *Swim and Captive Shark Programs.* The DA-BFAR, within one (1) year after the effectivity of this Act, shall develop human-shark interaction guidelines in captivity.

d) *Tourism Interaction.* The DA-BFAR, within one (1) year after the affectivity of this Act, shall develop human-shark interaction guidelines in the wild.

e) *Research Interaction.* The DA-BFAR, within one (1) year after the effectivity of this Act, shall develop research and researcher interaction guidelines for studies focusing on sharks.

f) *Non-Detriment Findings (NDF).* The DA-BFAR, within three (3) years after the effectivity of this Act, shall determine the NDF for targeted and incidentally caught shark species.

g) *Collection and/or Possession of By-Products and Derivatives.* The collection and possession of species shall only be allowed when the results of the NDF show that despite certain extent of collection, the population of such species can still remain viable and capable of recovering its numbers. For this purpose the DA-BFAR shall establish a schedule and volume of allowable harvests.

h) *Handling and Release Practices.* The DA-BFAR, within one (1) year after the effectivity of this Act, shall develop acceptable handling and release guidelines from fisheries of all types of protected and/or unwanted sharks based on the best available science and safe release experience.

i) *Bycatch reduction measures and reporting mechanisms.* The DA-BFAR, within three (3) years after the effectivity of this Act, shall provide technical

and financial assistance on research for gear restriction, and identify modified fishing gears to reduce shark bycatch mortality, which may include bait restrictions, use of different fishing hooks, varying hook depth, use of repellents, reducing soak time, and reducing number of hooks. The DAPBFAR shall develop a standard reporting system for sharks that are bycatch.

j) *Release and Reporting of Bycatch.* Live sharks that have not been assessed through the NDF shall be immediately released unharmed to the sea. Dead sharks shall be handed over to the DA-BFAR for proper documentation and disposal. Any incident must be reported to the competent authority using the standard reporting system.

ARTICLE II
Protection of Vulnerable, Threatened, Endangered, and Critically Endangered Shark Species

SECTION. 7. *Determination of Threatened Species: Vulnerable, Endangered, or Critically Endangered Species .* – The DA-BFAR, within two (2) years after the effectivity of this Act, shall determine whether shark species or subspecies of a population or subpopulation is threatened (vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered) based on available scientific data and with due regard to internationally accepted criteria, such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Criteria include but are not limited to the following:

a) Present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range;
b) Over-utilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;
c) Inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; and
d) Other natural or man-made factors affecting the existence of sharks.

The DA- BFAR shall review, revise and publish the list of categorized threatened sharks within two (2) after effectivity of this Act. Thereafter, the list shall be updated regularly or as the need arises. *Provided,* that a species listed as vulnerable threatened shall not be removed there from within three (3) years following its initial listing.

Upon filing of a petition based on substantial scientific information of any person seeking for the addition or deletion of a species from the list, the DA-BFAR shall evaluate in accordance with the relevant factors stated in the first paragraph of this section, the status of the species concerned, and act on said petition within a reasonable period.

The DA-BFAR shall also prepare and publish a list of sharks which closely resemble In appearance listed threatened wildlife, which species shall likewise be categorized as threatened.

ARTICLE III
Commercial and Municipal Fisheries

SECTION. 8. ***Identification of Critical Habitats, Reference Points, Limits, and Seasons.***

a) *Identification of Critical Habitats.* The DA-BFAR, within one (1) year after the effectivity of this Act, shall identify critical habitats for sharks and establish these as shark sanctuaries.

b) *Development of Target Reference Points (TRP) and Limit Reference Points (LRP).* The DA-BFAR shall, within three (3) years from the effectivity of this Act, determine TRP and LRP based on the results of national stocks assessments and the precautionary principle.

c) *Size Limitations.* The DA-BFAR shall, within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, determine the size limits for sharks.

d) *Catch Ceiling Limitations.* The DA-BFAR may prescribe limitations or quota on the total quantity of sharks captured, for a specified period of time and specified area based on the best available evidence, harvest strategies, and target limits. Catch ceilings may be established upon the concurrence and approval or recommendation of such special agency and the concerned LGU in consultation with the Fisheries Aquatic and Resource Management Council (FARMC) for conservation or ecological purposes.

e) *Establishment of Closed Season.* The Secretary may declare, through public notice in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation or in public service announcements, whichever is applicable, at least five (5) days before the declaration, a closed season in any or all Philippine waters outside the boundary of municipal waters and in bays, for conservation and ecological purposes. Provided, however, that this shall be done only upon the concurrence and approval or recommendation of such special agency and the concerned LGU and FARMC: *Provided,* further, That in such municipal waters, fishery management areas and other areas reserved for the use of the municipal fisherfolk, closed season may be established by the concerned LGU in consultation with the FARMC for conservation or ecological purposes. The FARMCs may also recommend the establishment of closed seasons in municipal waters, fisheries management and other areas reserved for the use of municipal fisherfolk.

f) *Support to Fisherfolk.* – The Department and LGUs shall provide support to commercial and municipal fisherfolk through appropriate technology and research, credit, production, and marketing assistance and other services such as, but not limited to training for additional/supplementary livelihood.

ARTICLE IV
Traceability

SECTION. 9. *System, Labeling, and Identification.* – All business operators identified in the supply chain of shark trading and utilization shall cooperate with the DA-BFAR in carrying out official controls, and shall have responsibilities including but not limited to the following:

a) *Implementation of traceability system.* Business operators must operate traceability procedures for ingredients, raw materials at all stages of production, processing, transport, storage and distribution, and be able to (i) identify any person or business operator that has supplied them with the species; (ii) identify any person or business to which they have supplied their products; (iii) the products that were supplied including quantity or volume, site of fishing grounds, species, and fishing gear used; and (iv) make this information available to DA-BFAR and their consumers.

b) *Labeling or identification.* Business operators must ensure that their products are adequately labeled or otherwise identified through relevant documentation. They must also comply with the labeling requirements of the country destination.

CHAPTER IV
ILLEGAL ACTS

SECTION. 10. *Illegal Acts.* – Unless otherwise allowed in accordance with this Act, it shall be unlawful for any person to willfully and knowingly exploit sharks and their habitats, or undertake the following acts:

a) Killing, taking, keeping captive, and trading vulnerable, threatened, endangered, or critically endangered species, except in the following instances:
    i. when it is done as part of the rituals of established tribal groups or indigenous cultural communities;
    ii. when the shark is afflicted with an incurable communicable disease;
    iii. when it is deemed necessary to put an end to the misery suffered by the shark;

iv. when the shark is killed or destroyed after it has been authorized research or experiments.

b) Inflicting injury which cripples and/or impairs the reproductive system of sharks;
c) Harassing sharks;
d) Disturbing sharks and their habitats;
e) Effecting any of the following acts in critical habitat(s):
    i. Dumping of waste products detrimental to sharks;
    ii. Squatting or otherwise occupying any portion of the critical habitat; and
    iii. Mineral exploration and/or extraction.
f) Introducing, reintroducing, or restocking of shark species without permits;
g) Finning;
h) Collecting, hunting, possessing, importing, exporting, or re-exporting sharks, their by-products and derivatives without the result of the NDF and full traceability at all stages, from collection to production, processing, transport, storage, and distribution;
i) Falsely advertising or mislabeling any product, which could mislead consumers;
j) Obstruction of corridors; and
k) Use of shark wires.

CHAPTER V
FINES AND PENALTIES

SECTION. 11. The following fines and penalties shall be imposed for violations of this Act:

a) Killing, taking, keeping in captivity, inflicting injury, harassing, and trading vulnerable, threatened, or critically endangered species:
    i. Imprisonment of two (2) years and one (1) to four (4) years and/or a fine of Thirty thousand pesos (P 30,000.00) to Three hundred thousand pesos (P300,000.00) per animal if inflicted or undertaken against vulnerable species;
    ii. Imprisonment of one (1) year and one (1) day to two (2) years and/or a fine of Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000.00) to Two hundred thousand pesos (P 200,000.00) per animal if inflicted or undertaken against other threatened species;
    iii. Imprisonment of four (4) years and one (1) day to six (6) years and/or a fine of Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) to Five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000.00) per animal if inflicted or undertaken against endangered species; and
    iv. Imprisonment of a minimum of six (6) years and one (1) day to twelve (!2) years and/or a fine One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) to

One million pesos (P 1,000,000.00) per animal if inflicted or undertaken against species listed as critically endangered.

b) Inflicting injury which cripples and/or impairs the reproductive system of sharks: imprisonment of one (1) month to six (6) months and/or a fine of Five thousand pesos (P5,000.00) to Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000.00), if inflicted or undertaken against other wildlife species.

c) Harassing sharks: imprisonment of one (1) month to six (6) months and/or a fine of Five thousand pesos (P 5,000.00) to Twenty thousand pesos (P 20,000.00), if inflicted or undertaken against other wildlife species.

d) Disturbing sharks and their habitats: imprisonment of one (1) month to six (6) months and/or a fine of Five thousand pesos (P5,000.00) to Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000.00), if inflicted or undertaken against other wildlife species.

e) Effecting acts in critical habitat(s): For illegal acts under paragraph (e) of the preceding section, the following penalties and/or fines shall be imposed: an imprisonment of one (1) month to eight (8) years and/or a fine of Five thousand pesos (P5,000.00) to Five million pesos (P5,000,000.00) shall be imposed.

f) Introducing, reintroducing, restocking of shark species without permits: an imprisonment of one (1) month to eight (8) years and/or a fine of Five thousand pesos (P5,000.00) to Five million pesos (P5,000,000.00) shall be imposed.

g) Finning;

Upon a summary finding of administrative liability, the owner, operator, boat captain, and master fisherman of the vessel, or the chief executive officer in a corporation, or the managing partner in a partnership shall be punished with confiscation of the catch and fishing gear, and a fine three (3) times the value of the catch or the value indicated below, whichever is higher:

1) Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000.00) for municipal fishing: Provided, That if the offender fails to pay the fine, he shall render community service;
2) Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) for small-scale commercial fishing;
3) One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) for medium-scale commercial fishing; and
4) Five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000.00) for large-scale commercial fishing.

Upon conviction by a court of law, the offender shall be punished with imprisonment of two (2) years to six (6) years and fine equivalent to twice the administrative fine, confiscation and forfeiture of fishing gear and catch.

h) Collecting, hunting, possessing, importing, exporting, or re-exporting sharks, their by-products and derivatives without the result of the NDF and full traceability at all stages, from collection to production, processing, transport, storage, and distribution.

Failure on the part of the shipping or forwarding company from whose possession the fish or fishery species imported or exported are discovered or seized to fully cooperate in the investigation conducted by concerned government authorities shall create a presumption that there is connivance or conspiracy between the shipping company and the shipper to perpetrate the aforementioned offense.

Upon a summary finding of administrative liability, the offender shall be punished with an administrative fine of five (5) times the value of the species or Three hundred thousand pesos (P300,000.00) to Five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000.00), whichever is higher, and forfeiture and/or destruction of the species.

Upon conviction by a court of law, the offender shall be punished with eight (8) years of imprisonment and fine of twice the administrative fine, forfeiture and/or destruction of the species: Provided, that offenders shall be banned from being members or stockholders of companies currently engaged in fisheries or companies to be created in the future, the guidelines for which shall be promulgated by the Department.

i) Falsely advertising or mislabeling any product which could mislead consumers;

Failure on the part of the shipping or forwarding company from whose possession the fish or fishery species imported or exported are discovered or seized to fully cooperate in the investigation conducted by concerned government authorities shall create a presumption that there is connivance or conspiracy between the shipping company and the shipper to perpetrate the aforementioned offense.

Upon a summary finding of administrative liability, the offender shall be punished with an administrative fine of five (5) times the value of species or Three Hundred Thousand pesos (P300,000.00) to Five hundred thousand

pesos (P500,000.00), whichever is higher, and forfeiture and/or destruction of the species.

Upon conviction by a court of law, the offender shall be punished with eight (8) years of imprisonment and fine of twice the administrative fine, forfeiture and/or destruction of the species: *Provided,* That offenders shall be banned from being members or stockholders of companies currently engaged in fisheries or companies to be created in the future, the guidelines for which shall be promulgated by the Department.

j) Obstruction of corridors;

Upon a summary finding of administrative liability, the offender shall be punished with an administrative fine of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (P150,000.00) to Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,00.00), dismantling of the obstruction at the expense of the offender, and the suspension or revocation of the permit or license.

k) Use of shark wires.

Upon a summary finding of administrative liability, the owner, operator, boat captain and master fisherman of the vessel, or the chief executive officer in a corporation, or the managing partner in a partnership shall be punished with confiscation of the catch and fishing gear, and a fine three (3) times the value of the catch or the value indicated below, whichever is higher:

1) Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000.00) for municipal fishing: *Provided,* That if offender fails to pay the fine, he shall render community service;

2) Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) for small-scale fishing;

3) One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) for medium-scale commercial fishing; and

4) Five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000.00) for large0scale commercial fishing.

Upon conviction by a court of law, the offender shall be punished with imprisonment of two (2) years to six (6) years and fine equivalent to twice the administrative fie, confiscation and forfeiture of fishing hear and catch.

SECTION. 12. ***Escalation Clause.*** **–** The fines herein prescribed shall be increased by at least ten percent (10%) every three (3) years to compensate for inflation and to maintain the deterrent function of such fines.

CHAPTER VI
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION. 13. ***Flagship Services.*** – Local government units shall initiate conservation measures for endemic and/or economically valuable species in their areas. For this purpose, they may adopt flagship species such as the whale shark *(Rhincodon typus)* or thresher shark *(Alopias pelagicus),* which shall serve as emblems of conservation for the local government concerned.

SECTION. 14. ***Information and Education.*** – The BFAR, DENR, DOT, DTI, LGUs, and other academic institutions shall undertake a nationwide information and education campaign to adequately inform the populace of the value of sharks and rays in the marine ecosystem, and of the importance of preserving their respective habitats and feeding grounds.

SECTION. 15. ***Transition Period.*** – Due to the substantially new requirement imposed by this Act, a transition period of three (3) years from its entry into force is provided. During the transition period, sharks by-products, and derivatives may be sold and traded, and stocks that have been produced before the end of the transitional period may continue to be sold or exported until exhausted.

SECTION. 16. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within twelve (12) months after the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Tourism, and the Committees on Environment and Ecology of the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively, shall promulgate respective rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act. Whenever appropriate, coordination in the preparation and implementation of rules and regulations on joint and inseparable issues shall be done by the Departments. The commitments of the State to international agreements and protocols shall likewise be a consideration in the implementation of this Act.

SECTION. 18. ***Separability Clause.*** – If any section or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining sections or provisions thereof not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION. 19. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION. 20. ***Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,