



Date: March 1, 2018
To: State Legislative Committee
From: Patrick H. West, City Manager *T.M.W.*
Subject: AB 2191 (O'Donnell) Great White Shark Research

Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell introduced AB 2191 and has requested the City to support this legislation. AB 2191 proposes to fund research of the increasing numbers of sharks along the California coast, as well as protection efforts for sharks and beachgoers. Attached for your information is a fact sheet on this legislation.

For more information, please contact Diana Tang, Manager of Government Affairs at (562) 570-6506.

cc: Mayor and Members of the City Council
Charles Parkin, City Attorney
Laura Doud, City Auditor
Douglas Haubert, City Prosecutor
Monique De La Garza, City Clerk
Tom Modica, Assistant City Manager
Kevin Jackson, Deputy City Manager
Michael Duree, Fire Chief
Stephen Scott, Interim Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine
Rebecca Jimenez, Assistant to the City Manager
Diana Tang, Manager of Government Affairs
DiMare, Brown, Hicks, & Kessler, LLC

Attachment
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FACT SHEET: AB 2191 (O'DONNELL)

GREAT WHITE SHARK POPULATION MONITORING AND BEACH SAFETY PROGRAM March 2018

Introduction

Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell introduced AB 2191 to fund research of the increasing numbers of sharks along the California coast, as well as protection efforts for sharks and beachgoers.

Summary

AB 2191 proposes to appropriate an unspecified amount from the State's General Fund to the Ocean Protection Council (Council) and require the Council to develop and implement a White Shark Population Monitoring and Beach Safety Program (Program). The purpose of the Program is to award grants to academic institutions engaged in, and local agencies assisting with, research regarding Great White Sharks. Funding could also be granted to local agencies engaged in operations to promote public safety on California's beaches.

Background

The Great White Shark also known as the Great White or White Shark is native to Southern California beaches. For years, commercial fisheries in California caught juvenile Great White Sharks, and sold the meat labeled as "shark" in fish markets throughout the State as recently as the 1990s. However, in 1994, California protected Great White Sharks from fishing, bycatch, and trophy hunting under its Endangered Species Act. Chris Lowe, Director of the Shark Lab at California State University, Long Beach, has been studying sharks for more than 20 years and has observed a population growth of Great White Sharks since 1997 in Southern California.

The Problem

While the Great White Shark population recovery is a conservation success story, according to the Dr. Lowe, 39 attacks between Santa Barbara and San Diego have been recorded since 1997, as opposed to 10 attacks in the previous 20-year period. Dr. Lowe states Great White Sharks almost never seek out humans as prey. However, fear of sharks in Southern California has grown due to recent attacks. Shark attack prevention is a difficult policy solution that other regions with similar situations are trying to reach. Education is important.

Long Beach Impacts

Long Beach would benefit from research and funding enabled through AB 2191 (O'Donnell). The City's coastline offers a host of recreational aquatic activities where at least 10 Great White Sharks were spotted in September 2017. Long Beach is also home to the California State University Long Beach Shark Lab whose mission, in part, is to utilize and develop technology to answer challenging questions important for the conservation and restoration of depleted populations. The Shark Lab would be eligible to apply for grant funding to support shark research. Additionally, the City's Fire Department would be eligible for grants to support their efforts to keeping beach attendees safe.

Next Steps

AB 2191 will be heard in the California Assembly Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife. A hearing date for this legislation has yet to be announced.