



Seek Adventure. Save the Ocean.™

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14th October 2022

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Madam Secretary

On behalf of the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), the world's largest ocean exploration and diver organization, I am writing to encourage you to support the adoption of Proposal CoP19 Prop. 37 to safeguard all species of requiem sharks, led by the government of Panama, onto Appendix II of the upcoming CITES Conference of the Parties in November.

With a global network of dive centers and professional members, including 870 PADI registered dive center and resort members, and an estimated 3.4 million recreational divers in the U.S., PADI enables millions of people to explore and help heal the ocean through education, life-changing experiences, and travel, as well as contributing an estimated \$11 billion to the US economy. Our non-profit PADI AWARE Foundation promotes ocean health through underwater citizen science, public policy and education, as well as community grants for local conservation initiatives. Dive tourism depends heavily on healthy underwater environments and is driven by top attractions such as sharks. Together, PADI and PADI AWARE Foundation have developed a *Blueprint for Ocean Action*, which includes a primary objective of protecting the most vulnerable shark species.

Panama's proposal, supported by 14 other CITES Parties, proposes bold action to protect many species that are integral to the recreational diving sector in the U.S. It is critical for both ecosystems and the businesses that depend on them that we balance the needs of humanity and the ocean. I am hopeful that you will continue to position the Department of the Interior and the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a global leader and help protect many iconic and economically valuable U.S. shark species from unsustainable levels of international trade. Thank you for your consideration of this pressing matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Drew Richardson
President and CEO
PADI Worldwide