[DATE]

[NAME]

[TITLE/POSITION]

[INSTITUTION/ORGANIZATION]

**RE: CALL TO STOP SERVING SHARK’S FIN SOUP**

Dear Mr./Ms. [NAME]:

It has come to [my/our] attention that [NAME OF RESTAURANT] is still serving shark’s fin soup. [We are/I am] writing to express concern about the potential health and environmental impacts of its consumption.

Studies show that several shark species are apex predators of the marine ecosystem, which means that they have among the highest levels of toxic mercury found in fish. Mercury has been recognized as a dangerous neurotoxin that can cause male sterility and extensive damage to the nervous system and fetuses. In 2014, a health risk assessment of shark fins collected from five cities in China revealed that a percentage of the fins contained levels of mercury and methylmercury that are unsafe for human consumption.

In addition to its possible health hazards, the high consumption of shark’s fin soup may have alarming implications to the environment. According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, a quarter of the world’s sharks and rays are threatened with extinction. Sharks grow slowly, mature late, and do not reproduce often, which means that shark populations are particularly vulnerable to overfishing and recover slowly, if at all. It has been estimated that up to 100 million sharks are killed annually to meet the demand of the international shark trade. Limited regulations exist to control this trade.

Despite the lack of understanding on the sharks’ various roles in ecosystems, it is clear that they are key players in structuring food webs, whether they are at the top of the food chain or at lower trophic levels. The removal of sharks from an ecosystem has the potential to create significant changes to predator-prey interactions, affecting the whole system. Aside from ecological benefits, sharks and rays have also been proven to boost local economies sustainable tourism activities and through fisheries in many developing countries.

Shangri-La, the Peninsula, InterContinental, and Hilton are just some of the 18,000 hotels that have already committed to stop serving shark’s fin soup. [I/we] urge you to do the same, and inform your customers of your commitment to shark conservation. An alternative would be to provide your customers information about the species, method of fishing, and site where the shark was taken for transparency and accountability. This will also assure the consumer that the species being served is not one that is protected by Philippine laws or threatened with extinction. Public awareness is essential in this pursuit.

If you will be bold enough to lead in marine conservation by simply removing shark’s fin soup from your menu, other restaurants will be inspired to follow. If the buying stops, the killing can too.

Thank you very much.

Yours truly,

[NAME]

[CONTACT INFORMATION]