



## FACT SHEET

AB 2191 (O'Donnell)

White Shark Population Monitoring and Beach Safety Program

### SUMMARY

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AB 2191 establishes the White Shark Population Monitoring and Beach Safety Program, which would award grants to academic institutions and local agencies working on shark research or conducting public safety operations regarding sharks at California's beaches.

### BACKGROUND

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The Shark Lab at California State University Long Beach has been studying sharks for nearly 50 years. It is one of the most advanced labs in the world using cutting edge technology like recirculating seawater tanks to store sharks and other fish, respirometers for measuring the metabolic rates of game fish, and a full electronics lab that can develop and create new sea-life tracking devices. This has kept them at the forefront of their field and California a leader in shark research. In addition to these advanced tools, shark researchers have also fostered partnerships with local government entities to conduct their research.

Cooperation between academic institutions and local agencies are the cornerstone of shark research and beach safety in California. Cities and counties have installed monitoring devices at beaches to help track shark movements, sheriffs' offices provide researchers access to vehicles and heavy equipment, and lifeguards use information from researchers to recognize threats to beach safety. This network helps keep beachgoers safe by educating the public, sharing information on shark research, and pooling their resources.

### NEED FOR THE BILL

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During the last 10 years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of sharks off of California's coast. Recent research estimates put the Great White Shark population off California's southern coast at around 2,400. These numbers reflect improvements in California's air quality, water quality, and fishery management. While this has been a positive environmental development, it has also created new opportunities and challenges.

Of the increases in shark population over the last decade, 2017 was an especially significant year. Increases in 2017 were so significant that the Shark Lab ran out of resources to continue tagging sharks with tracking devices. This not only meant less data for research, but less information for those trying to ensure safety on California's beaches. In order to ensure the continued health of marine ecosystems as well as the safety of California beachgoers, we must understand the factors that cause sharks to congregate at one beach over another. Researchers and their partners need more resources to continue monitoring, studying, and educating the public about sharks.

### SOLUTION

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AB 2191 provides needed funding by creating the White Shark Population Monitoring and Beach Safety Program, a grant program to support the work of academic institutions and their partners. In order to protect families and their children on California beaches, we must be willing to support shark researchers and the agencies assisting them.

### STAFF CONTACT

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