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M E D I A R E L E A S E

23 December 2009

Garrett's Department says cost of mako shark ban to fishermen is "minor"

Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett's Environment Department has claimed in an official document the cost to fishermen of a ban on fishing for mako sharks is "minor"

A document quietly tabled in the final sitting of Federal Parliament this year by Minister Garrett documents the Department of Environment's analysis of the impact of the mako fishing ban. (www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/.../treaties/species_nia.pdf)

The *National Interest Analysis [2009] ATNIA 26* paper compiled by Minister Garrett's Department stated:

"It is anticipated that the costs for most sectors will be minor"

Further it added:

"There is likely to be some cost associated with changes required by game or charter fishing operators where they target the species concerned."

Federal Coalition spokesman for Fisheries Senator Richard Colbeck said Minister Garrett and his Department obviously had no idea about the impact on the recreational fishing industry of a ban on mako fishing.

"Minister Garrett is fooling himself if he believes the cost impact on the industry is 'minor'," Senator Colbeck said.

"The Victorian recreational fishing industry alone believes the cost of the ban could remove \$150 million off the State's economy.

"Bait and tackle stores and charter operators have also estimated losses of tens of thousands of dollars – effectively putting them out of business – if the ban goes ahead.

"Minister Garrett needs to put a halt to his plan to ban mako shark fishing from 29 January.

"He should immediately commit to a genuine national consultation process involving both the recreational and commercial fishing sectors prior to implementing any type of ban. Only then will he start to understand the massive cost impact this will have on the fishing industry."

Senator Colbeck called on all members of the recreational fishing industry to conduct a ring in to key Rudd Government offices to ensure their voice was heard loud and clear.

“Kevin Rudd and his Labor Government need to know the cost of the mako ban plan is not ‘minor’, it will be a significant social and economic loss to Australia’s recreational fishing industry.”

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