

Conservative MP Alice Wong tucks into bowl of shark fin soup to oppose local bans

BY ALAN CAMPBELL, RICHMOND NEWS OCTOBER 13, 2012





MP Alice Wong enjoys a bowl of shark fin soup at the Jade Restaurant during a press conference yesterday at which she voiced her support of restaurant owner David Chung and her opposition to a municipal ban of the Asian delicacy.

Photograph by: Ming Pao, for Richmond News

Member of Parliament [Alice Wong](#) was back in her hometown of Richmond on Thursday — eating a bowl of shark fin soup.

At the Jade restaurant, Wong spoke to Asian media only, as it appears no English-speaking media were invited.

According to Chinese media reports, Tory MP Wong reiterated her government's stance that the banning of shark fin products, including the soup, is a federal responsibility and is not for the cities to ban.

Wong also appeared to back Jade restaurant owner David Chung's position that he is not breaking any laws by serving the shark fin soup and has every right to do so.

Wong's communication advisor, Robert Lynch, said a media advisory was sent out by the Vancouver office, adding that he would look into why no English-speaking media appeared to be invited.

Kevin Huang, a spokesman for [Shark Truth](#), a group that opposes the practice of shark finning, said his organization is still unclear as to who Wong is representing.

"Currently, we're trying to figure out whether Alice Wong is representing the Conservative government, in other words the federal government, in her stand, or if she's just going on her own.

"After we're clear on that, we'll be in a better position to make a comment. Since there was no official press statement, we're only going off our sources and the Chinese media. From what I understand, only Chinese media were invited."

Chung, who is also head of the B.C. Asian Restaurant and Cafe Owners Association, has said in the past that he doesn't know if the soup he serves is derived from one of the many endangered shark species. And he has refused to hand over samples of his shark fins to the [Vancouver Animal Defense League](#) for DNA testing.

The City of Vancouver is seeking a regional shark fin ban and giving local Chinese restaurants about a year to clear existing inventories, while Richmond, Burnaby and Surrey are all investigating a ban.

Chung has warned he'll declare war on any ban.

He claimed his shark fin products are federally approved and are not derived from the cruel act of finning, whereby sharks are caught, have their fins sliced off and then dumped back into the sea to die.

Chung said it's people's right to eat what they want and that any such ban is "culturally insensitive."

In his culture, serving a dish such as shark fin soup to someone is necessary to show sincerity in your gratitude, he added.

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