

Testimony Concerning HB 6955
Environment Committee, Wednesday March 11th, 2015
Barbara Rudnick

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of HB 6955, An Act Prohibiting The Sale And Trade Of Ivory And Rhinoceros Horn .

I strongly support ending commercial trade of elephant ivory in Connecticut, because the only way to end the slaughter of elephants is to stop the ivory trade. When the buying of ivory stops, the killing can too.

The demand for ivory has resulted in the decimation of many wild elephants. Close to 100,000 have been killed in the last three years alone. Every 15 minutes, on the average, a poacher will kill an elephant for its ivory and in most cases families and orphaned elephants are sadly left behind. The tusks are then savagely removed with machetes or chainsaws. If this continues it will result in their extinction within ten years. Man is truly their only predator.

The United Nations and US Intelligence Agencies show profits from ivory trafficking are fueling crime, corruption and violence in Africa and financing organizations that threaten both American and African security. These reasons alone should be enough to end the ivory trade.

Every piece of ivory is a haunting memory of a once proud and majestic animal that should have lived many years and was once a member of a close knit and loving family akin to our own. Elephants are known for forming deep familial bonds and will go to great lengths to keep one another safe from harm. They experience joy, anger, grief and compassion and are critical to the ecosystem. Every elephant slaughtered has suffered and died so that men without compassion or a conscience may steal their tusks for trinkets and souvenirs and make money by doing so. We must strengthen laws to prevent the killing of these majestic animals before it is too late. Every person that buys ivory has blood on their hands and has helped contribute to their death and extinction. There is no product that will ever justify the barbaric slaughter of them.

I was very fortunate and traveled to Kenya in 2012 and seeing both elephants and rhino's in the wild is something I will never forget. I also had the opportunity to visit the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust which is home to a large number of orphaned elephants and rhino's. The DSWT was one of the first organizations to alert the world to the plight of the Black Rhino in Kenya after two decades of rampant poaching that all but annihilated the species. As with the elephant orphans, Daphne Sheldrick was, in the early sixties, the first person to perfect a suitable milk formula and the husbandry necessary to hand rear the orphaned Black Rhino's. Many orphaned elephants and rhino's are alive today because of her and the care received at

DSWT. If you would like to see some of the work they do and incredible rescues that have taken place because of rampant poaching please visit <https://sheldrickwildlifetrust.org>.

The time is now, the only way to save these majestic animals is to eliminate the ivory trade. Extinction is not something that we can allow to happen and Connecticut must be part of the solution.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Barbara Rudnick
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