

Testimony Concerning H.B. No. 6955
Environment Committee, March 11, 2015
Bianca A. Molina

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of H.B No. 6955, an act prohibiting the sale and trade of ivory and rhinoceros horn.

I deeply care about all animals and the cruel act of poaching and objectification these animals for ivory and horn needs to be banned. These animals are highly intelligent and social sentiment beings. With the continuous rate of demand for ivory, it has been predicated elephants will be extinct within 10 years. This bill grants us with the opportunity to take part in lowering the demand by banning the sale and trade.

Statistics:

- *Up to 40,000 elephants are killed every single year (1 elephant every 15 minutes)*
- *Congo has lost 90% of their wild elephant population, and so on through all the elephant states.*
- *All extant five rhino species are threatened with extinction, with merely 28,000 remaining worldwide.*
- *Elephant and rhino poaching is a brutal and bloody practice – animals are chased with helicopters and shot down with military-grade weapons. Tusks and horns are harvested by cutting off the faces of the sometimes still-living animals. Babies are often killed for their tiny stubble of tusk or horn.*
- **Poaching is a national security issue** – *extremist groups and terrorist organizations are often involved in wildlife trafficking, using it to finance their military operations. Wildlife trafficking is among the top 5 criminal markets worldwide alongside narcotics, weapons, human trafficking, and counterfeiting.*
- *We may see **extinctions within our lifetimes**. Scientists estimate some populations of the African elephant will be extinct within the next few decades if poaching continues at current rate. Black rhinos have experienced a 96% population decline since 1970 with fewer than 4,800 members of the species remaining today.*
- **Poaching for ivory and rhino horns is the cause of this crisis.**

When I first became aware of the cruel and barbaric act of how ivory and rhinoceros horn are obtained, it was clear the sale and trade of all ivory and rhinoceros horn needed to be banned. It would be great, as a Connecticut resident of 25 years to know my state has initiated this bill. These innocent and beautiful animals do not deserve to be slaughtered for their beautiful features. They deserve to live a long and peaceful life.

I am urging the State of Connecticut to immediately prohibit the sale and trade of all ivory and rhinoceros horns. Please do not look the other way, these animals are depending on the ban to lower the demand and stop this baric and unnecessary cruelty that is causing them to die a horrifying death, lose family members, and go extinct.

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

Thank you,
Bianca A. Molina
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