

Connecticut General Assembly
Joint Environment Committee

March 9, 2015



Re: Support for HB 6955, An Act Prohibiting the Sale and Trade of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn

Dear Chair Kennedy, Chair Albis, and Honorable Committee Members:

On behalf of the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF), a national organization of attorneys working to protect the lives and advance the interests of animals through the legal system, and its more than 200,000 members and supporters, many of whom reside in the State of Connecticut, I am writing in support of HB 6955, which would ban the trade and sale of elephant ivory and rhino horns in Connecticut.

Illegal poaching is estimated to account for sixty-five percent of the deaths of African elephants, a critically threatened species whose population has been decimated by over seventy-five percent in the past few decades due to wildlife trafficking and a growing demand for ivory. It is estimated that an average of ninety-six elephants are killed everyday for ivory and that African elephants could become extinct in the next ten years. The United States is second only to China in the sale of ivory products. In recognition of the fact that domestic trade in ivory serves as a loophole for the illegal trade, the Obama administration issued an executive order in July 2013, declaring wildlife trafficking to be an “international crisis” and directing federal agencies to undertake rulemaking to eliminate import and export of ivory for commercial purposes.

Last October, more than 130 cities worldwide participated in the *Global March for Elephants and Rhinos*. Just last year, New York and New Jersey banned the sale of ivory. Additional ivory bans are pending in several states in addition to Connecticut, including California, Hawaii, Washington, Oregon, Iowa, Oklahoma, Virginia, and Massachusetts. Prohibiting the sale and trade in wildlife parts is a critical step towards protecting the world’s largest land mammals from extinction.

We urge your support for HB 6955 to help ensure that Connecticut becomes part of the growing list of states that are taking proactive measures to help halt the rapid decline of elephant and rhinoceros populations who are being slaughtered at an alarming rate for their parts.

Sincerely,

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