

Dear Co-Chair Kennedy, Co-chair Albis, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

Please accept this testimony in Support of HB 6955

Current Federal law is confusing and riddled with loopholes that are exploited by those involved in the international and domestic ivory trade. This also leads to consumer confusion about what is legal and what is not. The result is a flourishing, poorly regulated domestic ivory trade in the United States.

I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). The HSUS led efforts in New York and New Jersey to enact laws to prohibit sale, trade, and possession with intent to sell ivory and rhino horns resulted in them becoming the first states to shut down the ivory and rhino horn trade within their borders. Other states are following their lead. At \$8 to \$10 billion per year, the illegal wildlife trade ranks as the fourth most lucrative international criminal activity, behind only narcotics, counterfeiting, and human trafficking.

Elephants are being gunned down and poisoned in unprecedented numbers --- reaching nearly 100 killed per day --- all for their ivory tusks. Approximately 100,000 elephants in Africa were killed between 2010 and 2012. In 2014, more than 1,000 rhinos were killed in South Africa alone out of a remaining 29,000 left in the wild.

The threat of extinction facing elephants grows daily while poachers and traffickers continue their slaughter and despicable activities unabated. The time for a prohibition on the U.S. domestic ivory market is now and Connecticut can contribute to the federal, national and global conservation efforts by closing Connecticut's markets to ivory and rhino horns.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathy Kangas
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Humane Society of the United States
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