

March 11, 2015

Dorothy J. Rich
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Re: **SUPPORT of HB 6955**, a bill that would shut down market demand for elephant ivory and rhinoceros horns in Connecticut

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

Please accept this testimony from me in SUPPORT of HB 6955.

Current federal law is confusing and full of loopholes that are exploited by those who trade in ivory. The result is a flourishing, poorly regulated domestic ivory market in the United States. The threat of extinction facing elephants grows daily while poachers and traffickers continue their slaughter, often to support the funding of terrorist activities.

Now is the time for a prohibition on the U.S. domestic ivory markets and Connecticut can contribute to the federal, national, and global conservation efforts by closing Connecticut's markets to ivory and rhino horns.

Elephants are being gunned down and poisoned in unprecedented numbers—reaching nearly 100 killed per day—just 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. Everyone must do their part, or future generations will see elephants and rhinoceroses only as stuffed exhibits in museums.

Poachers kill entire elephant families. Elephant babies, who do not have tusks that have emerged, are left as orphans unable to fend for themselves and often die. And because they are such intelligent, social animals, the trauma of seeing their family members killed before them causes permanent damage to them.

In August 2014, 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, becoming the first states to shut down the ivory and rhino horn trade within their borders. This year many states are considering similar legislation, including California, Illinois, Hawaii, and Massachusetts. These states are taking a robust measure to crack down on the illegal wildlife trade out of a shared concern about the threat of extinction facing these imperiled animals as well as the threat wildlife trafficking poses on our national security.

Please support HB 6955.

Thank you,

Dorothy J. Rich