

**Testimony Concerning  
Environment Committee, 3/11/15  
Enid Breakstone**

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.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) passed the ban on selling elephant ivory in 1989. Between the 1930s and the 1980s, the global elephant population suffered a huge loss reducing the number from five million (in the 1930s) to 690,000 in the 1980s.

Since the turn of this century, elephants have suffered even more with their numbers plummeting because of poachers. It's estimated by CITES that 25,000 elephants were slaughtered in 2011 alone.

Many of us know that elephants live in a complex social order and that they mourn their dead. So we can only imagine the depth of the grief suffered by a young elephant as she watches her family gunned down and faces hacked for their tusks. This is beyond despicable and a disgrace to these beautiful animals. The emotional toll is too great for some of the orphans. Daphne Sheldrick, the head of the Nairobi Elephant Orphanage, has watched calves starve themselves in their grief.

In addition, elephants play an important role in their ecosystem by creating shallow holes in the land that can turn into water sources for other animals by using their large feet, tusks, and trunks. They also regulate vegetation. Elephants and rhinoceros hold great value as ecotourism is a popular way for the developing countries where they live to generate sustainable revenue. It's been shown that a live elephant can generate more income than her tusks or as a victim of trophy hunting. This makes protecting elephants, rhinoceros, and other wild animals much more advantageous to the countries where they live. In turn, those developing countries can participate more fully on the global stage.

According to Save the Rhino International in London, there were approximately 550,000 rhinoceros across Africa and Asia in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Now, according to the International Rhino Foundation, as of 2013, there appears to be under 29,000 rhinoceros living in the wild. South Africa has the highest rhino population, however, poaching has reached a crisis point and if left unstopped, all of these animals will disappear for good.

The awful truth is that if we don't protect elephants and rhinoceros from poachers and ban the sale of ivory and horn, extinction is imminent. What does that say about us in the modern world? And how do we explain to our children that we didn't care enough to save these animals who add so much to the big picture of the Earth?

Do we need any more evidence that banning the sale of ivory and horn now and forever is the right thing to do?

Please do the right thing. Pass HB 6955. Let's show the rest of the country and the world that Connecticut knows the right thing to do by taking action to protect animals and that we are a state that cares not only about companion animals, but those animals who live across the world.

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

(Source: [www.huffingtonpost.com/chantal-lyons/why-the-trade-in-ivory-mu\\_b\\_2583077.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chantal-lyons/why-the-trade-in-ivory-mu_b_2583077.html),  
<http://www.endangered.org/states-acting-to-ban-ivory-protect-elephants/>,  
<http://www.rhinos.org/rhinos/state-of-the-rhino-2013>,  
[http://www.savetherhino.org/rhino\\_info/poaching\\_statistics](http://www.savetherhino.org/rhino_info/poaching_statistics))

Respectfully submitted,  
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