

**Testimony Concerning HB 6955**  
**Environment Committee, March 11, 2015**  
**Julie Stankiewicz**

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.

It deeply concerns me that tens of thousands of elephants are slaughtered each year for their tusks and that the poaching of rhinoceroses is rising exponentially. I find it disturbing that the United States is the country with the second largest ivory market worldwide. Scientists predict that these species may become extinct if poaching continues at its current rate and in fact, one species of rhino has already become extinct.

I believe that it our collective responsibility to protect innocent animals from cruelty. Having volunteered at an animal shelter for a number of years, I have seen first-hand that animals share the same wide range of emotions that humans possess. Psychological studies have repeatedly shown that animals do not suffer less physical or emotional pain than humans do. The grief, anger, and fear of baby elephants abandoned by mothers who have been slaughtered by poachers must be truly unimaginable.

I feel that every creature has as much right to its own life as we do to ours. Please help the people of Connecticut to end the suffering of elephants and rhinos by prohibiting the sale of elephant and rhino horn in our state.

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

Thank you,

Julie Stankiewicz,  
Manchester, CT