

Testimony Concerning HB6955
Environment Committee, 11 March 2015

I thank the Environment Committee for this opportunity to show my support for HB 6955 An Act Prohibiting the Sale and Trade of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn.

On average, an elephant is killed every 15 minutes and the United States is the second largest market for elephant ivory [1].

More than 100,000 elephants were killed by poachers from 2010 through 2012 [2]. In 2013, poachers used cyanide to kill more than 300 of the 20,000 elephants killed that year [3]. If illegal poaching continues, 20% of Africa's elephants could be killed in the next 10 years. "Alarming increases in illegal killing for ivory are driving African elephants rapidly into extinction." [4]

There are approximately 25,000 rhinos in Africa according to a 2012/2013 census [5]. In 2014, an estimated 1200 rhinos were poached in South Africa and more than 100 have been killed this year in Kruger National Park alone [6]. The situation has become so dire that an organization called Rhinos Without Borders hopes to save the animals by airlifting them out of South Africa to Botswana where poaching is low. With only 5000 black rhinos left they are at risk of extinction.

The strong market for elephant ivory in the United States and high demand for ivory and rhinoceros horn in Asia [7] is fueling the killing of elephants and rhinos. The United States is the second largest market for elephant ivory behind China [1] and is a transit hub for smuggling rhino horn into Asia [8,9]. New York and New Jersey have banned the sale of ivory and rhinoceros horn and without a similar ban in Connecticut, the trade in these products will move into the state. Let's join our neighbors, New York and New Jersey, and help put an end to the senseless slaughter of elephants and rhinos.

"People who smuggle rhino horn, regardless of where it comes from, are no better than the poachers in Africa who hack off the horns of living rhinos and leave them to die a horrible death." [9] The same can be said for those who smuggle ivory.

Please support HB 6955 and ban the sale of elephant ivory and rhinoceros horn in Connecticut.

Thank you,
Susan Armknecht
Groton, CT

[1] www.ibtimes.com/illegal-ivory-trade-us-authorities-target-american-auction-houses-1656750

[5] www.savetherhino.org/rhino_info/rhino_population_figures

[6] citizen.co.za/340564/park-under-siege/

[2] www.pnas.org/content/111/36/13117.full.pdf+html

[3] www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/zimbabwe/10390634/Poachers-kill-300-Zimbabwe-elephants-with-cyanide.html

[4] www.livescience.com/47420-african-elephant-poaching.html

[7] www.march4elephantsandrhinosaurs.org/#!/the-crisis/c1dyn

[8] www.worldwildlife.org/magazine/issues/spring-2014/articles/operation-crash

[9] oxpeckers.org/2013/10/united-states-grows-as-hub-in-global-rhino-horn-smuggling/