

Testimony Concerning Bill No. 6955
Environment Committee, Wednesday, March 11, 2015, 1 P.M.

Susan Moran

I want to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of Bill No. 6955 – *AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE AND TRADE OF IVORY AND RHINOCEROS HORN.*

Elephants are emotionally complex, highly intelligent mammals that live in strong family groups. They're among the most perceptive beings on earth. I've seen this first-hand at the San Francisco Zoo & the National Zoo in DC where elephants' close relationships with their group, with other animals and with humans was evident. At the National Zoo, we saw a mother and daughter elephant actively engaging with Zoo keepers in physical and mental games/exercises to keep them stimulated and to prepare them to participate in their daily medical check-ups. In San Francisco, we saw a young elephant playfully tossing dirt over the fence onto a rhino in an adjacent enclosure, the two young animals engaging with each other as they might in the wild.

Today, by enacting HB 6955, CT can be a leader in protecting these magnificent elephants in the wild. The very survival of elephants is at stake since scientists now estimate that elephants are being slaughtered at a rate of 96 per day and could be extinct in less than 20 years. African refuges are being invaded and park rangers often killed, so poachers can remove elephant horns leaving adults to die a brutal death and to leave their babies alone and suffering. The profits from sale of illegal ivory often go directly to terrorist and militant groups.

NY and NJ recently enacted strict bans on the sale of nearly all ivory products shutting off their ports and markets to illegal wildlife trade. CT must prevent the movement of ivory trafficking from these states to ours. We've been named as one of six states vital to preventing ivory trafficking in the US due to our ports and dense population. CA is scheduled to address a ban this year. And, the US is second only to China in providing a market for illegally obtained ivory so our actions will have meaningful impact.

I am respectfully urging you to enact HB 6955 to implement strict bans on the sale, purchase, barter, trade and intra-state transport of ivory or rhino horn with limited exceptions for education/scientific purpose and to increase the criminal and civil penalties and fines for violations of the law.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

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