

**Testimony Concerning HB 6955
Environment Committee, March 11, 2015
Tammy Torres Hennessy**

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.**

First a few facts: over 30,000 African elephants were slaughtered for their tusks in 2012. Rhino poaching is also escalating exponentially. One rhino species is already extinct with the remaining five species on the endangered list. A staggering 96 African elephants are killed each day and a rhino is slaughtered every eight hours for the ivory in their tusks. This needless slaughter is disgusting and deplorable.

The trade in illegal ivory must stop and Connecticut has a unique and critical opportunity to join New York and New Jersey as one of the first states to enact strict bans on the sale of all ivory products. Last year's bi-partisan effort in New York and New Jersey has shut off their shipping ports and markets to illegal wildlife trade. The California State Legislature is scheduled to address a ban later this year.

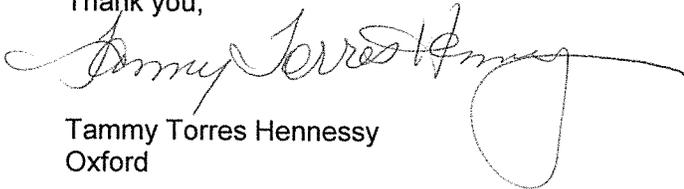
Connecticut needs to join our neighboring states to discourage the movement of ivory trafficking from one state to another, and within states. Because of Connecticut's dense population and ports the Wildlife Conservation Society believes Connecticut is one of six key states needed to enact bans within the US.

The United States is second only to China as the largest ivory market on a global basis. The demand for ivory has grown significantly as ivory prices in China have tripled since 2010. Scientists project that at the current levels of illegal poaching to meet the ivory demand, **elephants will be extinct within 20 years.**

I urge you to vote in favor of **HB 6955** to ban the sale, purchase, barter, trade and intra-state transport of ivory or rhino horn and **significantly** increase criminal and civil penalties and fines for violations of the law. When there is no demand there will be no more slaughter.

Thank you for affording me an opportunity to testify and I strongly urge you to support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,



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Oxford