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Chairman  
Environment Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200  
Hartford, CT 06106

**RE: HB 5578 An Act Prohibiting the Sale and Trade of Elephant Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn.**

Dear C-Chairs Sen. Kennedy & Rep Albis and Members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Glenn Hillman and I am a resident of Litchfield, Connecticut. This is the third time I have picked up pen to paper to address this committee on the issue of the ivory ban. I will be unable to attend the public hearing set for Friday March 11<sup>th</sup> 2016 to discuss HB 5578, "*An Act Prohibiting The Sale and Trade o f Elephant Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn*", so I am submitting this letter for your consideration.

I have been a collector of antiques and Americana for over 24 years and have previously served on the Collections Committee for the Litchfield Historical Society. I am also a supporter of environmental legislation so I hope I provide some balanced insight into this issue.

I am a strong supporter of environmental issues and I believe the killing of elephants and rhinos is abhorrent. Legislation banning the sale of contemporary ivory is an important means to help stop the illegal trade and help assist in the survival of these endangered species.

I am pleased this year's proposed bill HB 5578 contains exceptions for musical instruments and antiques it is a far better starting point then last years' all encompassing draconian proposal. However, I am still troubled by some of the specific language of the current bill. Specifically, Sec. 3 subs. (F) which states the "the owner or seller provides historical documentation demonstrating provenance." To the average person this simple line may seem quite reasonable, in fact quite unassuming and dull. However, to anyone with experience in the world of antiques this one statement in a defacto way will make virtually all antiques with elements of ivory banned. In my 24 years of experience collecting antiques I have found that the majority of antiques don't have any provenance at all. In my own personal collection I have twelve antiques that fall under the bill's definition of ivory. Of the twelve only two have full family provenances that date back to the time of their manufacture in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century and one of the two descended in my own family. All of the antiques I own containing ivory are actual

period pieces and have been authenticated by myself and dealers to be authentic because of their style, construction, shrinkage, oxidation, etc. These skills are gained by experience and the repetition of handling numerous objects over many years.

These skills are used by experienced collectors, dealers, and museum professionals alike and are drawn upon when evaluating the authenticity of an object. Following the language of the current bill I could potentially only sell two of these objects in the future without facing severe penalties and fines. Just because an antique has no provenance that passed down the generations doesn't mean it cannot be authenticated. It is a false premise to think all antiques have traceable recorded histories taking them back past the 'hundred year' threshold even if they are older than that date. Many objects over the years are separated from their family histories. Collectors and dealers consider themselves lucky if they have a provenance that states 'descended in the family of John Doe.' Will that be an adequate provenance for a Fish and Wildlife department official with no training in authenticating an antique? I think we all know the answer to that question.

While I agree with many of the provisions of this bill the issue of provenance alone forces me to again oppose this legislation. Sec. 3 subs. (F) should be stricken from the legislation. The bill raises a few serious enforcement and legal problems. What is to happen if no provenance exists but an item is authentic? Is there no legal appeal process? Who will decide this? Who is going to measure and weigh every object, antique or otherwise to see if it falls below the 20% threshold?

Please do not criminalize the sale of antiques. Again the bill's language requiring "historical documentation demonstrating provenance" should be stricken from the bill and all antiques containing ivory should be legal to possess or sell. The result of this bill would be to ban most antiques that contain any ivory and make these objects worthless. When these great works of historical and artistic importance become worthless they won't be preserved, and our cultural heritage will be devalued and forgotten. We cannot right the wrongs of previous elephant hunts centuries ago by in effect banning the sale of most antiques with ivory, nor should we. When nations forget their history they are apt to repeat their mistakes.

The focus of legislation should be on fighting the poachers and to ban the sale of all ivory being exported from Africa and Asia. There is a way to both save elephants, rhinos, whales, and walrus and to simultaneously protect our nation's cultural, artistic, and decorative arts heritage. It is through practical, responsible, carefully worded legislation that protects legitimate antiques but bans the illicit and illegal contemporary ivory trade.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Respectfully,

Glenn Forrester Hillman



## Attachment A

**Categories of Antiques that during different historical time periods may possess Ivory design elements or made entirely of ivory.**

|                                     |                           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Miniatures                          | Chests of drawers         |
| Boxes                               | Clocks                    |
| Tea caddies                         | Firearms                  |
| Swords                              | Canes                     |
| Corkscrews                          | Cutlery                   |
| All historical periods of Sculpture | Buggy whips               |
| Wall boxes                          | Snuff boxes               |
| Silver                              | Jewelry                   |
| Netsuke                             | Asian art & sculpture     |
| Indian art & sculpture              | Indian furniture          |
| Persian Art & sculpture             | African art and sculpture |
| Swagger sticks                      | Knife boxes,              |
| Religious sculpture                 | Miniature furniture,      |
| Bobkins                             | Thimbles                  |
| Knitting needles                    | Perfume bottle tops       |
| Desk sets                           | Desks                     |
| Dressing articles                   | Mirrors                   |
| Magnifying glasses                  | Pens                      |
| Picture frames                      | Barometers                |
| Scientific instruments              | Globes                    |
| Rulers                              | Measuring sticks          |
| Nautical antiques                   | Prisoner of War articles, |
| Ship models                         | Musical instruments       |
| Chess pieces                        | Checkers                  |
| Dominoes                            | Book covers,              |
| Buttons on clothing                 | Collar stays              |
| Ladies folding fans                 | Corset stays              |
| Razors                              | Shaving equipment         |
| Scrimshaw                           | Watch hatches             |