



**Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo**  
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March 8, 2016

Chair Ted Kennedy  
Chair James Albis  
Joint Committee on Environment

**Re: Support of HB 5578: Ivory/rhino horn ban bill**

Dear Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, and the members of the Joint Committee on Environment,

On behalf of Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo and its sixty thousand members we would like to submit this letter in strong support of H.B. 5578, which would restrict trafficking of ivory and rhino horn in the state.

Elephants and rhinos are facing a crisis driven by increasing consumer demand for their ivory and horn. Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo and the City of Bridgeport have had a long history in working with Elephants. In 1983 the Zoo made the decision to move its African Elephant another facility due to the fact that we strongly felt that such a magnificent and intelligent creature deserved to have a better home.

Not a very popular move in PT Barnum's City!!

Overwhelming evidence has shown that the legal trade in wildlife products helps to obscure and propagate a parallel market in illicit products. Interpol, the international police agency, estimates that customs officers only interdict 10% of smuggled goods. The U.S. is one of the top global markets for ivory, and given the large volume of international trade that passes through New Haven, Bridgeport, New London, and other points of entry and egress, it is likely that significant quantities of illegal wildlife products pass through border inspections undetected, to be sold openly in Connecticut under cover of assumed legality.

Connecticut is not alone in its determination to enact state conservation measures: New York and New Jersey passed bills to regulate ivory and rhino horn trade in 2014, California passed a similar ban in 2015, and Washington State voters overwhelmingly approved a ballot initiative to restrict commerce in a broad suite of threatened and endangered species (also in 2015). Several other states have bills currently moving through their respective legislatures including Hawaii and Massachusetts. The world is making strides to protect elephants and rhinos from poachers. Let's give Connecticut the distinction of helping change the global conversation on this critical issue. Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo is dedicated to Conservation, Education, Recreation and Research as an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. By banning the sale of endangered wildlife products in our state, you can send the message to poachers, traffickers, and consumers that we value our world's animal's more than needless trinkets and ornaments. Stopping this bloody trade will reap benefits for wildlife, international security, aid anti-corruption efforts, enable more effective use of our law enforcement funding here and abroad, and give our descendants the chance to share this planet with some of the planet's truly most majestic creatures.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Gregg Dancho  
Zoo Director