

**TESTIMONY CONCERNING HB 5578: PROHIBITS SALE AND TRADE
OF IVORY AND RHINOCEROS HORN**

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MARCH 11, 2016
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I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of HB 5578: prohibiting the sale and trade of ivory and rhinoceros horn.

It is well documented that the U.S. is among the top countries in the world that drive the illegal poaching of elephants and rhinoceros for their horns and ivory. With 100,000 elephants killed between 2010 and 2012, an average of 1 every 15 minutes, the worldwide numbers of rhinos at a mere 29,000, and the worldwide ivory trade doubling since 2007, Connecticut needs to enact stricter laws regarding ivory and horns. The states surrounding us—New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Jersey—have either already passed laws restricting the sale of ivory or are about to. Connecticut should not be left behind as the state that lags in the international welfare of animals. That is not the reputation it needs.

The killing and massacring that goes on to obtain this ivory is out of a nightmare: babies are left orphans after their mother are murdered in front of them, living elephants have their faces torn off, whole tribes of elephants are slaughtered for trinkets, rhinos and elephants are shot from the air with militarized guns, all this and more is what Connecticut is promoting by allowing the trade to continue. Our neighboring states have realized the depraved depths to which poachers sink for horn and ivory, and so have passed laws to inhibit their corrupt business; we need to do the same. This bill will not affect legitimate businesses in Connecticut, as it does not criminalize possession of ivory, inheritance of ivory, or the sale of old ivory/horn products that are actually antiques, and not new ivory/horn being passed off as old ones, as criminals are wont to do. It is too difficult for non-experts to distinguish between old and new ivory, so criminals exploit that chink in order to further their illicit trade. This bill will help in the global fight against terrorism, since terrorists use the ivory trade as a main source of income, and it will help the federal government fight against the illegal ivory trade, since federal law does not regulate intrastate ivory trade, which is a major loophole in the system for poachers to get their wares into the U.S. Even the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service believes strongly in these bills that ban intrastate ivory/horn trade.

With species teetering on the brink of an extinction precipice, Connecticut needs to enact legislation that will help the world's animals, not aid in their ultimate destruction.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

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