

March 11, 2016

Via Email: [envtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:envtestimony@cga.ct.gov)



Connecticut State Joint Committee on Environment  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Re: Safari Club International's Comments on House Bill 5578, *Sale and Trade of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn***

Dear Co-Chair Kennedy, Co-Chair Albia, and Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Environment,

Safari Club International (SCI) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments for House Bill 5578 (H. 5578) and respectfully urges you to oppose this legislation. SCI and its members support punishing those who illegally kill wildlife and believe such individuals should be penalized to the full extent of the law. However, the solution to poaching will never be found in proposals that punish law-abiding citizens. Instead, Connecticut should look for strategies that combat those who intentionally violate the laws pertaining to the take of animals.

SCI understands the desire to conserve wildlife, but this piece of legislation is based on propaganda rather than fact. Science, not the hyperbole and emotionalism of anti-hunters, should provide the foundation for laws that affect the management and conservation of wildlife. Although anti-hunters may think that it is preferable to influence the public with emotionally-based campaigns, what they achieve in the name of conservation often fails to be in the best interest of wildlife.

**Safari Club International**

SCI, a nonprofit IRC § 501(c)(4) corporation, has approximately 50,000 members and 190 chapters worldwide, including membership and a strong chapter network in Connecticut. SCI's missions include the conservation of wildlife, protection of the hunter, and education of the public concerning hunting and its use as a conservation tool. SCI has long been an active supporter of using sound-scientific principles in managing wildlife populations.

**House Bill 5578, *Sale and Trade of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn***

If enacted, H. 5578 will prohibit the possession, transport, sale, and trade of ivory and rhinoceros horn in the state. Neither the bill nor their supporters can explain exactly how such prohibitions will positively impact these species.

The prohibitions are not necessary because other treaties and laws already provide greater and more appropriate protections to conserve the species singled out by the bills. For example, the African elephant and rhinoceros – species who are coveted for their tusks and horns – are already listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). As a result, the trade of these species is already regulated by CITES.

For an effective solution to ivory poaching, we must look for strategies to combat those who intentionally and illegally take and traffic ivory. But instead of focusing on poachers, smugglers and black-market profiteers of illicit ivory, supporters of H. 5578 have decided to attack law-abiding owners of legally obtained ivory, including hunters who import legally hunted trophies, musicians whose instruments

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contain ivory, law-abiding gun owners whose antique firearms contain ivory, and the owners of countless items that may feature ivory in small amounts.

These ordinary items include antiques, artwork, jewelry, knives, furniture and many other lawfully owned and obtained items that contain ivory. H. 5578 adds insult to this injury by taking from owners the value of ivory they own legally.

The goal of this proposed ivory ban is to strip ivory of all commercial value by prohibiting its sale, but the potential result would be an unconstitutional taking without due process or adequate compensation. But even setting those very serious legal issues aside, this plan is doomed to fail because of its naiveté, corrupt local governments that aid and abet poachers, and a total disregard of the thriving and well-documented illegal ivory trade in Asia.

Instead of relying on science and economics, ivory ban advocates say they are motivated to choke the global demand for ivory by setting an example for smugglers in China and elsewhere in Asia. This rationale, too, fails to pass even superficial logical, practical and political standards of scrutiny.

The Endangered Species Act, the Lacey Act, and the African Elephant Conservation Act are federal laws that already extensively restrict the importation, possession and trade of endangered and threatened species. In addition, Connecticut state laws already protect local wildlife and prohibit the possession of any animal product from another country where the wildlife is known to have been killed illegally.

While there is a legitimate concern regarding ivory trafficking throughout the world, CITES has not identified any significant flow of illegal ivory into or through the United States. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has also reported that there is no significant trade of illegal ivory into this country and the continued sale of lawfully owned ivory in the United States will not increase poaching. This piece of legislation will do nothing to prevent poaching.

SCI and every legitimate hunter abhor the act of poaching. Unfortunately, H. 5578 will do nothing to stop poaching in Africa or elsewhere. It will only penalize law-abiding citizens of Connecticut. Poachers are not hunters and hunters are not poachers.

For the aforementioned, we respectfully urge the Committee to oppose H. 5578. If you have any questions or need anything further, please contact Jeff Patchen, Manager of Government Relations, State Affairs at [jpatchen@safariclub.org](mailto:jpatchen@safariclub.org).

Sincerely,



Larry Higgins  
President, Safari Club International