



**National Headquarters**

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Environment Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly  
State Capitol  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of Defenders of Wildlife, a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities with over 6,000 members in the state of Connecticut, I am writing to express our support for House Bill 5578 to ban the sale of ivory and rhinoceros horn in Connecticut.

HB 5578 would ban the purchase, sale, offering for sale, possession with intent to sell, of ivory and rhino horn in the state. This bill is a crucial step toward eliminating the growing trade in illegally trafficked wildlife products and reducing the demand for such items in the United States.

The elephant poaching crisis has become increasingly severe over the past several years. Approximately 96 elephants are slaughtered daily by poachers, and over 100,000 were killed between 2010 and 2012. Unfortunately, the U.S. is one of the largest ivory markets in the world, so there is a desperate and urgent need for legislative measures such as this one. Reducing, and ultimately eliminating, demand for these products in consumer countries, such as the U.S., is an important part of combatting wildlife trafficking.

Additionally, all five rhino species are in serious danger due to poaching. Africa's rhinos are critically endangered, with a population of fewer than 5,000. There are only 3,000 one-horned rhinos remaining in India and Nepal, and Southeast Asia's Sumatran and Javan rhinos number only in the hundreds and tens, respectively. The horns, made of a substance akin to fingernails, are used in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Despite conclusive evidence that they have no curative properties, over a thousand rhinos are killed for their horns every year.

Ending the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife parts and reducing domestic demand for these products is a core part of the work at Defenders of Wildlife. We urge the Environment Committee to support HB 5578. We are hopeful that this legislation will receive overwhelming support on the heels of similar measures in other states and growing momentum nationwide.

Sincerely,

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