

**STATEMENT OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUSIC MERCHANTS  
CONCERNING  
CONNECTICUT SENATE BILL 227**

The National Association of Music Merchants represents more than 9,000 companies which manufacture and sell musical instruments. This statement is submitted in connection with the consideration of SB 227 which would ban the possession and sale of many products containing elephant and mammoth ivory. For the reasons set forth herein, NAMM urges that SB 227 not be approved in its present form.

By way of background, small amounts of elephant ivory were used in a variety of musical instruments – e.g., acoustic guitars, pianos, violin bows, bassoons, bagpipes – although usage had essentially stopped by the time elephant ivory was listed on CITES Appendix I in 1990 and passage of the African Elephant Conservation Act the same year. Many of the instruments containing these small amounts of ivory are still in use today by professional as well as amateur musicians.

NAMM believes that SB 227 is flawed in a number of respects:

- Though its stated purpose is to prohibit the “import, sale and trade of big-game hunting trophies from overseas,” SB 227 also includes within its definition a manufactured product, e.g., a music instrument, containing African elephant ivory.
- SB 227 purports to ban the “import” of any of the named species. Whether this is construed to mean import from outside of the United States or import from another state, the bill would encroach on interstate or foreign commerce in violation of the Constitution.
- Banning mere possession of an unregistered musical instrument or one which was acquired after the effective date of the bill would be an unwarranted assault on cultural activities and could severely and adversely impact all musicians in the state.
- If SB 227 moves forward, an exemption from the general ban should be created for musical instruments containing small amounts of ivory, e.g., less than twenty percent (20%) by volume. Because ivory use in musical instruments generally stopped decades ago, these products do not contribute to the current concern over elephant poaching. These instruments were never purchased simply because they contained ivory, but because of their playability attributes.

- While four states have passed laws banning the sale of African elephant ivory, no state has taken the draconian step of banning the possession of items containing such material. A 2015 bill in New Jersey which would have banned possession was vetoed by the Governor.

NAMM representatives would be happy to discuss the musical instrument industry's concerns in more detail.

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