



Statement of
Jo-Anne Basile, Executive Director
CT Votes for Animals
In Support of HB 5394
Before the Joint Committee on the Environment
February 15, 2019

Senate Chair Cohen, House Chair Demicco and honored members of the Environment Committee

CT Votes for Animals is a grass roots advocacy organization representing 3,000 members across the State. CVA advocates for pro-animal policies and seeks to improve laws that protect animals. CVA strongly urges the Committee to favorably consider HB 5394, with an amendment supported by a broad-based coalition of wildlife and animal welfare organizations.

HB 5394, as amended, will prohibit the intra-state sale of ivory and rhino horn in Connecticut. The bill will crack down on illicitly aged ivory while ensuring that nothing in the law would prohibit inheritance or non-commercial gifts. Our neighbors in New York, New Jersey have already imposed a prohibition on the sale and purchase of ivory and rhino horn. CT needs to take action now to ensure that the State is not used as an illegal point of entry as other states shutter their doors by passing prohibitions.

Elephant and rhino poaching is brutal and has pushed these animals to almost total extinction. According to the Great Elephant Census, African Savana Elephants declined by 30% in just seven years; if poaching continues at its current rate scientists predict the elephant could be extinct within a decade. 2015 was poised to be the worst year on record for rhino poaching with 1300 rhinos killed across Africa. Now all five rhino species are threatened with extinction.

CVA urges the Committee to favorably consider HB 5394 as amended. CVA has supported similar bills in past years. It is our hope that this year the General Assembly will finally enact a law that enables CT to join other States in efforts to combat a global poaching crisis of these magnificent animals.