

February 19, 2020

To: Honored Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Demicco and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Svetlana Wasserman, 37 Day Road, Greenwich, CT 06831

Re: Environmental Committee testimony for 02/21

Dear Environmental Committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the important conservation items on your agenda.

I am writing to express my strong support for **HB 5103 (Environmental Justice), HB 5104 (Wildlife Trafficking), HJ 1 (Long Island Sound Blue Plan), and SB 99 (Polystyrene)**.

1) Low-income black and Latino communities in Hartford, Waterbury, New Haven, and Bridgeport are disproportionately impacted by climate change, pollution, and other environmental threats. HB 5103 is necessary because environmental racism still impacts communities across our state. Rather than suggesting that developers conduct public engagement activities like notifying neighborhood and environmental groups of their plans in writing, HB 5103 mandates these activities.

2) I am also writing in support of HB 5104 to prohibit the import, sale and possession of African Elephants, Lions, Leopards, Black Rhinoceros, White Rhinoceros, and Giraffes. Poaching has decimated the population of African elephants, lions, leopards, black rhinoceros, white rhinoceros, and giraffes. These animals are critical to maintaining the ecological biodiversity of their regions. Connecticut must step up and do its part to protect delicate ecosystems, thwart illegal poachers, stabilize local economies, and cut off funding to terrorist and criminal groups.

I urge you to support HB 5104, and pass a statewide ban on the import, sale and possession of the “Big Six African species”.

3) HJ 1 protects The Long Island Sound, which is important to more than 20 million people who live within 50 miles and generates billions annually for local economies through tourism, fishing and other uses. Without the Long Island Sound Blue Plan, the state has no authority to adequately plan for multiple future uses of the Sound, whether they be recreational, industrial, or developmental.

4) Single-use expanded polystyrene containers fill up our landfills, endanger our wildlife and are easily replaced by biodegradable alternatives. Polystyrene has proven to be a headache for recycling centers. There is not a single recycling center which accepts polystyrene trays and containers of any kind in Connecticut. SB 99 would mandate that public school districts, institutes of higher education, and charter schools discontinue the use of polystyrene trays. This would ensure that students are not exposed to the harmful chemicals found in polystyrene products, and would force schools to find biodegradable, cleaner alternative food trays.

Thank you for taking my comments into your consideration.

Sincerely,

Svetlana Wasserman