

WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED VIA EMAIL: APRIL 7, 2015

RE: H.297

Vermont General Assembly
Committee on Fish, Wildlife, and Water Resources
ATTN: Chair, Representative David Deen
State House, Montpelier, VT 05601

Dear Chairman Representative Deen and esteemed Committee Members:

I ask you to please do our part to help end the horrific slaughtering of wild elephants and rhinos for their tusks and horns. Even though Africa is a half a world away, poaching syndicates and terrorist groups are poaching them to extinction for buyers in places like China and the United States.

As a U.S.-based wildlife photographer who does trips to Africa, I have seen first-hand the effects of poaching. In Zambia just last year I saw a baby elephant wandering without its mother, and learned she had been poached the day before. The baby was too young to live on its own and was just wandering around, waiting to be taken by predators or starve to death. There are now more elephants being illegally slaughtered than are being born. The species is at a tipping point, and rhinos are even worse-off. Last year was the worst year for rhino poaching in decades, and the species is almost nearly non-viable.

We must stop the demand where we can, and believe it or not, ivory is still being sold in our shops here in the U.S., including Vermont, and unknowing sellers cannot tell the difference between old ivory and new. There is no reason why we need ivory or rhino horn. Please, support H.297 and let no Vermonter be part of this bloody trade.

Thank you for your attention in this vital matter.

Sincerely,

Michael Paredes
mike.paredes@gmail.com

I took this photo of elephants at a water hole in Zimbabwe. Not long after, over 300 elephants in this same area were poisoned to death and their tusks hacked off to be sold to...?

