

Re: H.297 An act relating to the sale of ivory or rhinoceros horn

Dear Representative Kathryn Webb,

As a supporter of the iworry campaign (DSWT) I would like to appeal for your help in saving the African elephant and rhino from extinction.

As a fellow Vermonter, I would like to take a moment to tell you my love of elephant's story. When I saw the article this morning on the DSWT news feed I knew I had to take a few minutes to write to you about how important this is. I do not live in Vermont anymore however it is my home state and remains very close to my heart. I grew up in small rural Glover, Vermont. I shared a special connection with my father as we both care deeply and have a strong appreciation for all animals (domestic and wild). I remember sitting with him at a very young age reading through the National Geographic looking at photographs of beautiful elephants and other animals wondering why humans would do things to cause them harm and possible extinction. As you know the situation for the African elephant has worsened over the years.

Across Africa, one elephant is killed every 15 minutes to supply the ever increasing demand for ivory in the Far East and, closer to home for the people of Vermont, with the United States being the second largest market for ivory. At this rate African elephants could be extinct in the wild by 2025. The current poaching crisis not only constitutes an immense threat to the most iconic animals, but it is also a matter of global security, with terrorist organizations utilizing ivory as a way to fund their atrocities. The illegal wildlife trade now generates an estimated \$23 billion per year and has become the fourth most lucrative illegal activity behind drugs, counterfeiting, and human trafficking.

The ivory trafficking crisis is a complex problem and one which requires action on multiple levels to stem the slaughter of elephants in the wild, which is why we are encouraged to witness such positive action in the U.S.A. Two states, New Jersey and New York, have both signed legislation to ban the import and in-state sale of both ivory and rhino horn, with New Jersey imposing a full ban. These efforts mark a substantial development in tackling the illegal ivory chain. Loopholes that had previously allowed for some ivory trade in the States are now closed and we are now appealing for Vermont to follow suit with a ban to match that in New Jersey.

State bans are a step forward in ending the elephant poaching crisis, but without nationwide efforts, other States will be utilized as laundering points. We are deeply thankful to Vermont for their foresight in considering legislation to restrict ivory and rhino horn sales within State borders and we remain hopeful that the Green Mountain State can enact a complete ban. Please join us and demonstrate your commitment in the fight to save the African elephant and

rhino ahead of the hearing on the bill before the state's House Committee on Fish, Wildlife and Water Resources.

Representative Webb, these animals are magnificent and a very important part of our ecosystem. The little girl from Vermont grew up and decided that she needed to do something to help elephants. I just returned from Thailand where I had the privilege to volunteer at an elephant sanctuary. These Asian elephants were rescued from the tourism and logging industry where they suffered just as the African elephants are suffering. I really appreciate you taking the time and consideration on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Molly Clark

