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SAVING WILD LIVES TODAY
SECURING HABITATS FOR THE FUTURE

Tuesday April 7th 2015

Representative David L. Deen
Vermont General Assembly
State House
Montpelier
VT 05601

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

Dear Rep. David L. Deen,

On behalf of The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT) I would like to appeal for your help in saving the African elephant and rhino from extinction.

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 organisations utilising 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 utilised 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 on Wednesday April 8th.

Thank you for your steadfast support.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Brandford
Executive Director