



April 7, 2015

Elephants DC
PO Box 21
Landenberg, PA 19350

Vermont General Assembly
Committee on Fish, Wildlife, and Water Resources
State House, Montpelier, VT 05601

Dear Representative David Deen:

Children learn "E" is for "Elephant" - not "Extinction."

My name is Jen Samuel, I am the president of Elephants DC, a nonprofit dedicated to ending the ivory trade worldwide and advancing elephant well-being.

Please accept this letter as Elephant DC's full endorsement of ending ivory and rhino horn commerce in Vermont. Elephants and rhinoceroses, iconic, beautiful and keystone species are being killed to the brink of extinction by humans to satisfy idolatry. People covet the tusks of elephants; and horns of rhinoceroses. These gentle giants are slaughtered daily to feed a global, unnatural and ultimately unsustainable lust for their body parts. Ivory buying funds terrorists and transnational criminals, who – to meet the global demand for ivory - kill endangered species in exchange for weapons to kill people.

Sadly, some ivory “collectors” are stockpiling ivory, bidding on extinction. Vermont can help turn the tide, as the United States is the second largest consumer of ivory after China.

A wise man once said, “Ivory buying is not a victimless crime.” For future generations, we must recognize that living elephants are invaluable. We must value the earth's largest land mammal – a kind, compassionate, and wise species – over unnecessary ivory trinkets and archaic carvings. Ivory has value on elephants only.

A lie often hides behind the truth. Ivory traders, and ivory lovers, argue that “ivory is art” and “elephants are producers of ivory for us.” The truth is, art creates. Art is inspirational, and where there is life, there is hope. Thus true art uplifts, it does not diminish the presence of gentle, intelligent, and ecological essential mammals on this earth for greed's sake.

The unspoken truth is ivory commerce in all forms - raw or carved - fails to serve the greater good of this planet. The ivory trade - and wildlife crime - is nefarious. According to the departments of Justice, State, and Interior - as well as the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and the President of the United States of America, ivory trade funds terrorists and transnational criminals, destabilizes global stability, threatens American security, and destroys ecosystems while robbing future citizens - of all nations - the right to grow up in a world where wild elephants still exist.

National Geographic reports 100,000 elephants were slaughtered between 2010 and 2012. More than 35,000 elephants were butchered in 2014. Poachers, including militias armed with AK-47s, invade African nations to kill

elephants. These terrorists groups range in name - such as al-Shabaab, The Lord's Resistance Army, Boko Haram and Janjaweed - but they all have one thing in common: they also kill people.

It is very difficult for the most sophisticated laboratories in the world to differentiate new ivory from old ivory. Illegal ivory hides behind the guise of "antique," "bona fide antique," "mammoth," "bone" and even "jewelry." The transnational criminals - ivory smugglers - are quite good at making new ivory look old. And there is no application for law enforcement to tell the difference. Once illegal ivory hits the U.S. marketplace, we have already lost.

Elephants DC is inspired by the people of Vermont, especially the children, who have called for the end of all ivory and rhino horn trade in the Green Mountain State. Please be the leader the elephants and rhinos need, their very existence on this planet depends on your unwavering support. And it is the contention of Elephants DC that history will remember the individuals who took true and just action to stand up against amoral commercial trade in ivory and rhino horn.

In New Jersey, where a complete ivory and rhino horn sales ban is now in full effect, citizens can continue to possess legally acquired ivory. They can inherit ivory as well. But by ending the commercial trade, it sends a clear message that elephants and rhinos are invaluable – and worth saving. Vermont can help guide the nation, and the world, by declaring its trade robust but one driven by a strong moral compass that values a planet where elephants and rhinos still exist, rather than a room full of unnecessary trinkets.

For future generations, global stability, national security, the biodiversity of the earth - and to save elephants and rhinos from extinction – completely ban the domestic commercial trade of ivory and rhino horn in Vermont. Such fearless action will make the world a better place, and the children of Vermont shall rejoice.

Thank you,



Jen Samuel

President

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Our mission is to end the ivory trade worldwide and advance elephant well-being through education, advocacy and awareness.