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From:

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Vermont House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish & Wildlife

Chair: Amy Sheldon

A good bill should provide for both protection of true endangered species as well as the preservation of genuine antiques and historical objects. A bill that is well thought out and inclusive with all parties' participation should be the goal.

The preservation of the antique industry that generates annual taxable revenue, while at the same time supporting existing federal law that carves out proper exemptions for antiques should be included. The committee should represent voluntary caring compromise between all parties; protecting collectors fundamental rights as well as citizens, museums, and institutions. If important pieces of history come to market all parties should have the opportunity to collect.

I strongly believe we all have the responsibility to protect items of our shared past. The bill as written lacks a fair and balanced approach. It will actually legislate away thousands of dollars of private wealth. Working Vermonters will be shocked by this revelation.

Many successful collectors have left their collections to be sold with proceeds benefiting local, state and institutions causes. Such as the recent South Hero estate left to the town and a NEK Estate leaving ten million (\$10,000,000.00) to a museum while that was clearly not entirely from the deceased collections, it speaks to the value these folks place on civic duty. These collectors are sensitive to issues, have a scholarly passion for collecting and a caring sense for giving back. The late collector, Brooks Buxton and the late preservationist Paul Bruhn are real examples of protecting Vermont's past.

This legislation will put many innocent people and organizations in jeopardy with no demonstrable benefit.

Keep in mind that thousands of utilitarian products have been made from hundreds of animal parts over the centuries, and they all have value to our shared history and diverse cultures. Cost prohibitive DNA and carbon testing would be necessary to protect each piece and every one that may come in contact with these items, and to what end?

Rather than feel-good legislation to appease an individual, let's come together to build consensus and a law which does some good while avoiding unintended harm. We would look forward to partaking in that process.

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