

**From:** Peter Hetz <peter.hetz@laikipia.org>

**Sent:** Friday, February 21, 2020 1:51 AM

**Subject:** [External] Vermont H.99

Dear State Legislature colleagues,

My name is Peter Hetz, and I'm a Charlotte resident. I have lived and worked in wildlife conservation in Africa for the last 45 years, and am a former Vice President at TetraTech-ARD, an international development consulting firm, based in Burlington, Vermont. My career started in Kenya; and as part of my "retirement", I am leading a 20,000-strong membership organization dedicated to natural resources conservation and land management in central Kenya - with a successful wildlife conservation model as a result.

I appeal to you to pass H.99 without further reservation.

Mr. Merrill has apparently provided you with (mis)information suggesting that the trade in wildlife and wildlife products should be allowed based on robust wildlife populations in Africa, and that restricting trade jeopardizes Vermonter's rights.

The trade in wildlife and wildlife parts is insidious and worldwide. It is singularly contributing to the demise of wildlife species world-wide. My expertise lies in Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia, where I have been engaged in the establishment of community conservancies, local protected areas, and national parks and reserves. All areas have witnessed a significant decrease in wildlife numbers based on poaching driven by illegal wildlife trade.

During my working history in Kenya, we have documented a decline of almost 70% in megafauna - the animals that are the showcase species of the African safari. Elephants, giraffes, rhinos, zebras, lions, leopards, cheetahs, etc. This demise has been driven in part, by habitat loss, but also by significant poaching led by the trade in wildlife products.

The US now figures among the top three of the world's largest importer of wildlife products in the world, along with China and the EU. Moreover, according to a UN report from May 2019, one million species are threatened with extinction from these same practices.

I can forward terrible pictures of the travesties being perpetrated on wildlife species in Kenya, and the impact to our local economy and peoples; and I can share charismatic African landscapes, filled with wildlife that are protected by our communities. I can also forward endless papers, research, trade statistics, etc. documenting the travesty perpetuated every day on wildlife species,

But it's simply time to do the right thing, and pass H.99. There is no sound rationale for perpetuating the trade in endangered, critically endangered and threatened wildlife species.

We need this action now, Kenya needs your positive engagement on this legislation, and the world needs it. Our children will thank you.

Sincerely yours,  
Peter Hetz