

From: Tara Hetz

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 5:55 PM

Subject: Rhinos, Elephants, Pangolins, giraffes and vultures

Dear Chair Sheldon and Vice-Chair Lefebvre and House Representatives,

My name is Tara Hetz and I am encouraging you all to see and pass bill H.99 out of the committee and on to the next step without delay. I am a resident of Charlotte, but have spent most of my life in East Africa. I grew up in the middle of Serengeti National Park from the ages of 2-7 and returned to East Africa as soon as I could. I can say, hands down, that the thing I love most is nature and the wildlife (both flora and fauna) that exist in nature.

I have seen poaching first hand and it is tragic. It must come to a stop and Vermont has to play it's role. And it can!

I was most recently in Kenya leading a multi-sport adventure 'safari' dedicated to rhino conservation in Laikipia, Kenya. Laikipia is home to over 50% of Kenya's black rhino population and 70% of its white rhino population. I wanted to write you that we haven't had a poaching incident in the last 6 years, but sadly, in December 2019, 2 white rhinos were poached on Lewa Conservancy, near Laikipia. Heart breaking news. I have dedicated several years to putting together a fundraising trip for rhino conservation. The rhino is the keystone, umbrella species that helps to protect all other species and habitat. It also is a key species in employment, women's rights, children's education and national pride. Habitat loss, climate change, human population growth and poaching are huge issues that we face on a daily basis. We are already combatting so much to keep wildlife wild and roaming in Kenya. Poaching should no longer be a factor.

What is the connection to Vermont? I think you know the connection (the fact if we allow legal trade and sale of endangered species within the state, we are spurring on poaching) and how important it is that Vermont play its role in helping to stop the illegal trade and sale of endangered species. Please see bill H.99 and pass it along so that it can actually get passed.

I am including some photos of the recent trip- Adventure for Rhinos- where 8 American guests participated on a trip of life-time, while supporting the #RhinoRevivalFund- a fund dedicated to expanding the rhino landscape in Laikipia, Kenya and conserving wildlife in Kenya! They are playing their part. We need all of the Vermont to play its part as well.

Thank you for your time.

Please take a look at the bill tomorrow and pass it along.

All the best,

Tara (a passionate female conservationist).





Tara Hetz

"Don't just travel. Come be active. Come be engaged. Come make a difference!"

[Adventure For Rhinos](#)