

Sent: Friday, September 18, 2020 7:21 AM

Subject: IVORY BAN

I was born in the country of Ethiopia on the Continent of Africa. I am now a resident of South Hero, Vermont. How is it, that Vermont Legislators find it in their scope of work to push the following agenda? I urge you to contact Representative Mitzi Johnson and Senator Tim Ashe and ask them to show more regard for the people and wildlife of Africa, the citizens of Vermont, and for our global natural heritage. Urge them to do the right thing and use their influence to stop H.99.

How is it that in the midst of a global pandemic, with people concerned about the future, with cities tossed in turmoil, and with an unsure economic future for so many, our legislature can find it within themselves to take up bills which not only fail to address a need, not only fail to solve a problem, but may actually create problems?

Even though Senator Ashe and Representative Johnson pledged COVID-19 only legislation for this legislative session, it looks as though there will be a push from them to pass a bill in this already long session which is referred to as "The Ivory Bill." H.99 would make it illegal to sell not only lawfully possessed private property (antiques, etc.) made of or with Ivory, but that containing any product from 17 FAMILIES of animals.

Not only does this bill go far beyond federal law which already regulates these items, it doesn't fit some key concerns of most voters. It will have a bad impact on the value of historical pieces of art, which will hurt not only Vermonters, but tax revenues, and while it might sound like a good idea, the reality is that not only is this bill an expression of neocolonialism and western privilege, it will be bad for wildlife.

Senator Ashe stated recently that he and Representative Johnson had agreed to move the bill. This in spite of the fact that the House Committee pushing it received a letter from Dr. Christopher Brown of Namibia urging them not to move the bill as it will have no positive impacts on conservation of the animals, but will more likely have significant negative impacts.

Dr. Brown is a conservation ecologist who has spent his entire conservation career working in Southern Africa; in government for 15 years as a research scientist, then Director of Environmental Affairs in the Namibian Government, and 16 years in the environmental non-governmental sector as Director of the Namibia Nature Foundation and currently CEO of the Namibian Chamber of Environment.

What makes legislators in Vermont believe they know more than African scientists, conservationists, and environmentalists? I'm afraid the answer may be privilege.

Sincerely, Mr. Reuel Peterson South Hero Vermont.