

[DATE]

Representative FULL NAME

ADDRESS1

ADDRESS2

ADDRESS3

**Re: AB 96 - Banning ivory sales in California**

Dear Rep. NAME,

As a supporter of The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT) I would like to appeal for your help in saving the African elephant and rhino from extinction. I have welcomed President Obama's decision to impose a ban on commercial ivory imports in the USA. However, without in-state bans across the USA, we are forced to watch as existing legislation fails to address ivory trade and loopholes are exploited by criminals. Evidence suggests loopholes allow for illegal ivory to be filtered into the market, whilst current legal sales act to fuel demand, which in turn encourages poachers, smugglers and traders to decimate elephants.

The ivory trafficking crisis is a complex problem and one which requires action on multiple levels to stem the slaughter of elephants in the wild, which is I am encouraged to witness such positive action in New Jersey and New York. Both have signed legislation to ban the import and in-state sale of both ivory and rhino horn, with New Jersey imposing a full ban. These efforts mark a substantial development in tackling the illegal ivory chain. Loopholes that had previously allowed for some ivory trade in the States are now closed and I am now appealing for California to follow suit with a full ban to match that in New Jersey.

Following California's State ban on the trade in elephant parts, including ivory in 1976, loopholes have since emerged making it almost impossible for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to enforce the law.

**California remains the second largest market for ivory sales in the United States.**

Thanks to House Representatives and Speaker of the Assembly, Toni Atkins, Bill AB 96 was passed out of the California Appropriations Committee on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June by a vote of 12 to 4; I am now appealing for you to vote yes to AB 96 when it comes to Assembly. We rely on you to bring this new legislation to law.

I would strongly urge you to remain committed to the proposed bill AB 96 (Atkins/Lara). History has shown us that without a complete, clear-cut ivory ban, elephants will continue to be slaughtered to supply an ever-increasing demand for ivory. **I am deeply thankful to California for their foresight and remain hopeful that the State will enact a complete ban.**

Please demonstrate your commitment in the fight to save the African elephant and rhino ahead of the house vote on Friday June 5<sup>th</sup>. Now is the time to stand united for wildlife.

Yours sincerely,

[FULL NAME]