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[DATE]

Re: Illegal trade in ivory

Dear _____,

As a local resident, member of the electorate and supporter of the internationally respected *iworry* campaign (The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust), I would like to appeal for your help in saving the African elephant from extinction.

Across Africa, one elephant is killed every 15 minutes to supply the demand for ivory in the Far East and the United States of America - currently the second largest market for ivory. The current poaching crisis not only constitutes an immense threat to the most iconic animals, but it is also a matter of global security, with terrorist organisations utilising ivory as a way to fund their atrocities. It is believed that the illegal wildlife trade now generates an estimated \$23 billion per year and has become the fourth most lucrative illegal activity behind drugs, counterfeiting, and human trafficking.

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 why I am encouraged to witness such positive action in the USA. Three states, New Jersey, New York and California, have signed legislation to ban the import and in-state sale of both ivory and rhino horn. These efforts mark a substantial development in tackling the illegal ivory chain and one which must be replicated in the UK.

It is evident in recent years that the UK Government has been attaching greater importance to tackling wildlife crime. The announcement of the Buckingham Palace Declaration, an action plan to strengthen defences against trafficking launched in March 2016, is commendable. I am also encouraged to learn that the UK Government has confirmed it will fund the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit for at least the next four years.

However, I am appealing to you today to please ensure that the Conservative Party manifesto will 'press for a total ban on ivory sales' in the United Kingdom and commit to this pledge. While it remains possible for individuals in the United Kingdom to buy and sell 'antique' ivory, which requires no certificate of authentication, there will always be significant scope for illegal ivory to enter the market.

Please make a stand by; (1) destroying the UK stockpile of seized ivory to send a clear message to the world that this Government is committed to ending the illegal ivory trade and; (2) introducing legislation to ban the sale of ivory and rhino horn products in the UK.

The needs for a ban are plentiful and The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and other respected Non-Governmental Organisations have at their disposal a wealth of information to justify these needs. As I write to you, US States are actively discussing legislation to ban the sales of ivory and rhino horn, they recognise the role they can play in saving iconic species, now is the time for you and the UK to do the same – we must stand United For Wildlife.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME]