

Friday May 29th 2015

Representative Jeff Barker
900 Court St NE, H-480
Salem, Oregon
97301

Re: SB913 - an act relating to the sale of ivory and rhinoceros horn

Dear Rep. Barker,

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. The DSWT have witnessed the atrocities caused by the illegal ivory trade for the past 38 years. They have watched Kenya's environment and livelihoods suffer from dwindling elephant populations and we 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 United States remains 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. 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. In DSWT's most recent report, 'Dead or Alive: Valuing an Elephant' they exposed the true value of elephants to Kenya's economy. Wild elephants are worth 76 times more alive than dead. The benefits to keeping elephants in the wild are endless.

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 we are 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 Oregon to follow suit with a full ban to match that in New Jersey. I would strongly urge you to remain committed to the proposed bill SB913 which includes minor exemptions on ivory products which contain less than 20 percent of ivory. Additional exemptions, which include mammoth ivory, are greatly discouraged and should this legislation be passed, it will not be worth the paper it is written on. 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 Oregon 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 hearing on the bill before the state's House Judiciary Committee on Monday 1st June.

Yours sincerely,

[FULL NAME]