



TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT OF HB 5394**
AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF IVORY AND RHINOCEROS HORN IN THE STATE

February 11, 2019

To: Honorable Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Demicco and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Lori Brown, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **IN SUPPORT OF HB 5394**, An Act Prohibiting the Sale of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn in the State.

Elephant and rhinoceros poaching is a brutal practice in which tusks and horns are harvested off the faces of sometimes still-living animals. Poachers have also killed over one thousand park rangers across the globe in their relentless pursuit of illicit ivory.

The international ivory trade has been linked to both **organized crime and terrorist organizations**. President Obama recognized wildlife trafficking, of which the ivory trade is a part, as an escalating global crisis in 2013. In 2017, President Trump issued an Executive Order to strengthen law enforcement efforts in combating wildlife trafficking and other transnational crimes.

Despite federal laws restricting wildlife trafficking, ivory and other illicit products continue to be smuggled into local and state markets. Therefore, we must have state laws to compliment federal laws and close loopholes.

In 2016, federal authorities inspected more than 183,000 shipments of wildlife products. Despite these efforts, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services believe a significant amount of elephant ivory continues to be illegally imported. They also noted that federal law does not regulate commercial activities that occur entirely within a state. **HB 5394 would close intrastate loopholes and make law enforcement's job easier by complimenting federal action.**

New York and New Jersey have passed laws to this effect, and Connecticut must join them in passing a state ban to stop ivory traffickers. As neighboring states take measures to combat wildlife trafficking, products like ivory inevitably move to states with weaker laws and regulations.

It is important to note that HB 5394 would NOT criminalize possession of ivory currently owned by Connecticut residents nor prohibit inheritance or noncommercial gifts. It would also not restrict the sale of genuine antiques or musical instruments that meet specific requirements. It would simply make it harder for criminals to move illicit ivory through our state, and therefore **we urge you to vote YES on HB 5394.**

Thank you for considering this testimony as you deliberate on HB 5394.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori Brown".

Lori Brown

Executive Director

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