

Dear <Congressman, Senator, or Representative>,

As your constituent I'm writing to urge you to support bill <bill number> which seeks to outlaw sales and import of African wildlife parts, such as ivory or rhino horn, and hunting trophies. Such restrictions are critical to reduce US demand and to prevent the extinction of elephant and rhinoceros species.

Currently, intrastate and interstate sales of ivory are restricted to grandfathered ivory. That is, ivory with a documented proof of origin that has been legally acquired prior to 1990. Nevertheless, further legislation is necessary because ivory and rhino horn without a proof of origin or with a forged proof of origin are commonly sold in the United States. As a result, and in spite of current prohibitions, our country is still the second largest destination for illegal ivory in the world, second only to China.

Unfortunately current efforts to stop poaching in Africa are falling short. Failing to support sensible legislation to prevent illicit ivory and rhino horn sales wastes American taxpayer dollars already going to fund conservation and foreign aid programs in Africa. Therefore this legislation is necessary to stop demand for ivory and rhino horn in the United States.

Besides grandfathered ivory, the current legislation also permits the import of hunting trophies from legal hunts that require a hunting license. While a fraction of money from sales of these hunting licenses might support the local African economy and go towards local conservation efforts any benefits are outweighed by the need to protect remaining wildlife populations.

I urge you to support in full the legislation introduced by <bill number> so that our state can join the rest of the country in standing against elephant and rhino poaching by prohibiting sales and import of the products and hunting trophies made from their parts.

Fixing the current legislation is important to me because:

- The laws in the current form are hard to enforce partially due to the lax proof of origin requirement. Furthermore, legal sales of ivory and rhino horn are driving the demand, while simultaneously driving up the price and thus further exacerbating the poaching issue.
- Terrorist and insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and Lord's Resistance Army, as well as perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide, and many rebel groups operating in Central Africa are partially funded by sales of poached ivory. Continued poaching will only put more money into the hands of these groups.
- At the current rate of poaching the two species of African elephant are facing extinction within the next 20 years.
- Not supporting sensible legislation to prevent ivory and rhino horn sales wastes taxpayer dollars already funding conservation and foreign aid programs in Africa.

The clock is ticking for these species. I hope that I can count on you to prevent our state from becoming entangled in this environmental disaster.

Sincerely,

<your name>