

March 4, 2015

The Honorable Toni Atkins
Speaker, California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Ricardo Lara
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Speaker Atkins and Senator Lara,

On behalf of the Enough Project, thank you for coauthoring AB 96 which will close a loophole in existing state law that enables the illegal sale of ivory in California.

Some of the worst human rights violators on Earth have recently turned to a new source of income to finance their killing and terror: the slaughter of elephants for their tusks.

As you know, the current poaching crisis is devastating elephant and rhinoceros populations. AB 96 provides a strong framework that will close a loophole in existing state law that enables the illegal sale of ivory in California. Due to an exception for ivory products predating international trade bans that current state law permits, there is widespread confusion among vendors about what constitutes the legal and illegal sale of ivory. A Natural Resources Defense Council report found that up to 90% of the ivory for sale in Los Angeles and some 80% in San Francisco were likely illegal under California law. Sadly, the result of the worldwide ivory trade, of which California remains a part, is that more than 35,000 elephants and more than 1,000 rhinoceros are killed each year for their ivory tusks and horns. Poaching to satisfy growing demand for ivory for decorations, jewelry and "medicinal use" has led to an increased likelihood that these species will face extinction in our lifetime. It is not only a serious conservation issue; it is also a significant national security and humanitarian concern.

As a frontline human rights organization, we see the connection very clearly. The killing of Africa's elephants for the illegal trade of ivory is also funding rebel groups that are killing people and destabilizing the entire region. These are groups that are notorious for committing human rights violations including murder, mutilation, rape, widespread abductions of children and adults, sexual slavery and large-scale massacres.

Sadly, California is the second largest ivory market in the United States. But California is also in a powerful position to take the lead in helping to end this crisis.

Thank you again for drawing attention to the elephant and rhinoceros poaching crisis and for championing AB 96.

Sincerely,



John Prendergast
Founding Director, Enough Project

cc: Assemblymember Levine