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STATE & LOCAL AFFAIRS DIVISION
DANIEL REID, OREGON STATE LIAISON

March 24, 2015

The Honorable Floyd Prozanski
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary

Re: Senate Bill 913– OPPOSE

Dear Chairman Prozanski:

On behalf of the members of The National Rifle Association, I oppose Senate bill 913. This bill would do nothing to promote its purported goal of addressing poaching and the illegal ivory trade, while it would impose a heavy burden on law-abiding citizens.

Illegal trade in wildlife, as well as poaching for meat and products such as horns and tusks, takes its toll on the health and viability of wildlife populations. Further, it undermines the tremendous sustainability achievements made possible by hunters and other wildlife conservationists in the United States and other parts of the world. The NRA applauds serious efforts to stop poaching and the illegal ivory trade, but SB 913 would not materially contribute to that goal.

This bill would, however, harm those who have no part in these activities. American collectors, sportsmen, hunters, and recreational shooters have legally purchased firearms that incorporate ivory features for decades. These include some of America's most historically-significant and collectible guns. Historically, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintained the position that most ivory in the U.S. has been legally imported and that its sale in the U.S. did not materially contribute to the illegal ivory trade. Nevertheless, under SB 913 the purchase, sale, offer to sell, possession with the intent to sell or import for purpose of purchase or sale of any ivory (defined to include mammoth ivory), ivory product, rhinoceros horn, or rhinoceros horn product would be prohibited. The NRA is opposed to SB 913 because, if implemented, it would amount to the taking of property that had been acquired legally and in good faith. Needless to say, property that cannot be sold is radically diminished in value.

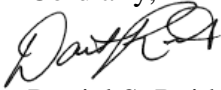
While the proposed amendment (-1) contains limited exceptions, it does not adequately address these concerns. The exemption for guns and knives over 100 years old places the onus on the owner to prove the ivory meets the requirement. In most cases, pre-ban ivory pieces lack the

documentation required to meet this exemption and the amendment provides no guidance as to what documentation would satisfy this requirement. Further, the firearm or knife would have to be comprised of less than twenty percent by volume. This imposes arbitrary distinctions on people who had acted similarly under current law. For example, if a person had documentation to prove a shotgun with an ivory bead sight was over 100 years old, he or she would be able to sell the shotgun because of the small size of the bead. However, if another person had a pistol with ivory grips with documentation, he or she might not be able to sell it because of the volume limitation. This would even be true if both persons had obtained their firearms from the same dealer, on the same day, with the same understanding of then controlling law. Moreover, as a practical matter, accurately measure the “volume” of a complex mechanical object such as a firearm or of small, non-removable ivory components such as inlaid decorations would be a daunting task.

While the NRA stands in opposition to the illegal ivory trade and poaching, banning the trade and sale of legally owned, pre-ban ivory will not save one elephant (much less mammoths, ivory from which is covered in the bill, even though the creatures themselves are long extinct). The NRA is receptive to measures that directly target the illegal ivory trade and poaching. We do not, however, support symbolic measures that do little more than move the goalposts for law-abiding citizens and deprive them of the value of property that was originally obtained legally and in good faith.

Thank you for your attention and I ask that you oppose this bill.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Reid', written in a cursive style.

Daniel S. Reid
State Liaison