

March 24, 2015

### **Written Comments of David Kracke in Support of SB 913**

I am a member of the International Board of Directors of WildAid, an international conservation organization based in San Francisco. I present these comments and my testimony this morning in support of SB 913.

WildAid has been instrumental in reducing demand for rhino horn and ivory in China, Viet Nam and other Asian countries through a concerted education effort that reaches over a billion people per week in those countries. Our work is paying off in that recent polling data shows a tremendous increase in the understanding of how the demand for rhino horn and ivory is leading to increased poaching of rhinos and elephants, and if not stopped, to their extinction.

Peter Knights is the founder and executive director of WildAid. He recently testified in favor of a similar bill in California identified as Assembly Bill 96 which seeks to ban rhino horn and ivory in California. Mr. Knights' testimony in support of the California law follows and is applicable to our efforts in Oregon:

*Good morning Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,*

*I am Peter Knights, CEO of WildAid, an international conservation organization based in San Francisco, and I am here to urge your support for Assembly Bill 96.*

*Since 1989 I have researched illegal wildlife trafficking, working in over 40 countries from the African nations where the elephants are poached to the main markets in Asia where carvings and trinkets are sold. We are currently engaged in ivory and rhino horn demand reduction programs in China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand and here in the US.*

*WildAid runs the world's largest wildlife product demand reduction campaign in China, a key factor in reducing shark fin consumption by 50-70% in the last few years. Another important factor was that in 2011 California banned the trade and sale of shark fin. Where California leads others follow and swift passage of AB 96 would inspire others to follow on ivory and rhino horn, too.*

*Mr Chair this bill is very important in closing existing loopholes in California's ban on ivory and rhino horn sales. The effect of ambiguous laws on poaching is well documented. In 1989 when ivory trade was partially legal, elephants were poached at the rate of 70,000 a year by some estimates. In response to a global outcry, the international ivory trade was banned and many consumers bowed out. Ivory prices plummeted and poaching went down, not because of intensified anti-poaching activity, but due to diminished demand.*

*But the effort wasn't universal, and it wasn't sustained. In 2008, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species allowed a one-off sale of ivory to China, a move that reignited the market there, fueled by the country's growing affluence.*

*The easiest way to sell poached ivory is to launder it through "legal" channels and sadly poaching has risen again to around 33,000 elephants a year. The proceeds are fuelling corruption in Africa, organized crime, militias and even groups, such as Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army Al Shabaab.*

*Economic growth in Vietnam is having a similar effect on the rhino horn market. But with clear, strong, enforceable laws and public awareness it is a reversible situation.*

*California is believed to be the second largest market for ivory in the US after New York. Despite current California law restricting ivory sales, the grandfathering in of pre-1977 ivory has made enforcement impossible and facilitated continued sale of ivory, contributing to poaching in other parts of the world. Banning sales and trade, as AB 96 would do, will make enforcement a far easier matter and send a clear signal to the rest of the world that ivory has no value here. The bill would also bring penalties up to date with the greatly inflated profits from ivory sales to be a real deterrent and more than just a cost of doing business.*

*Mr Chair New York and New Jersey have already taken the step of banning sales and these bills enjoyed complete bipartisan support – including enactment by New Jersey Governor Chris Christie over the objection of the NRA. We that we hope we can be replicate that dynamic here in Sacramento.*

Thank you.

Sincerely,

David Kracke

International Board Member

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