

*The Nation's First
Elephant Sanctuary*



PAWS
PERFORMING ANIMAL
WELFARE SOCIETY

Founded in 1984
PROTECTION
EDUCATION
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SANCTUARY
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May 19, 2015

House Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Position: Support SB 913 – Prohibition on Sales of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horns

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and its more than 50,000 supporters – many of whom are Oregon residents – I urge you and members of the Senate Committee On Judiciary to support SB 913, the bill that would prohibit the sale of ivory and rhinoceros horns in Oregon.

Founded in 1984, PAWS operates three sanctuaries for captive wildlife in California. Our largest facility is ARK 2000, a 2300-acre natural habitat refuge where we care for a variety of wild and exotic animals, including nine Asian and African elephants. PAWS is recognized internationally for its expertise in the care and management of captive wildlife. I serve on the Director's Advisory Committee on the Humane Care and Treatment of Wild Animals for the California Department of Fish & Wildlife.

I have worked with elephants for more than 30 years, and after getting to know these animals as I have, I cannot imagine the horror that individual elephants and their families endure when under attack by poachers who mercilessly slaughter both young and old for their tusks. The insidious trade in ivory is not just about species or populations, it concerns individual elephants who maintain intricate familial connections, possess complex systems of communication, and who are empathetic and self-aware – making their physical and psychological suffering all the more devastating.

Nearly 100 elephants are killed each day in Africa, and more than 1,000 rhinos out of a remaining 29,000 in the wild were poached in South Africa alone in 2014. These animals are gunned down or poisoned and stripped of their tusks or horns for trinkets and symbols of social status. The criminal syndicates driving the illegal wildlife trade are often involved in other illicit activities such as narcotics and weapons, and some are linked with terrorist groups.

The United States is the second largest market for illegal ivory. New York and New Jersey have already passed strong legislation to end the sales of ivory and rhino horns, and many other states are pursuing similar bills. These statewide bans are critical, as there is no effective way to visually distinguish illegal ivory or to determine whether the ivory originated from another species such as mammoth.

Unless action is taken now, elephants and rhinos are headed toward extinction. PAWS stands behind SB 913 so wild elephants and rhinos can live free in their native lands for generations to come. I strongly urge you to support this vital bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Stewart".

Ed Stewart
President and Co-founder, PAWS