



Date: May 2, 2015

To: **House Committee on Judiciary**
Representative Jeff Barker, Chair
Representative Any Olson, Vice Chair
Representative Jennifer Williamson, Vice Chair

From: Sharon Harmon
Executive Director, Oregon Humane Society

Re: **SB 913**

Established in 1868, the Oregon Humane Society is the state's largest and oldest animal welfare organization with over 50,000 supporters statewide. We are not affiliated with any local or national organization.

I am writing today to ask for your support of SB 913.

In 2014 the Oregon Legislature declared that animals are “capable of experiencing pain, stress and fear” and “should be cared for in ways that minimize pain, stress, fear and suffering.” This bold proclamation is not followed by a qualification that certain species are exempt or that it does not include animals located outside of Oregon's borders; it stands alone in ORS 167.305 embodying the reverence Oregonians have for animals. There is information ad nauseam about the pain and suffering endured by ivory bearing animals when poachers engage in the brutal process of removing their horns and tusks. Senate Bill 913 should pass for that reason alone, but the need to curb the ivory industry extends even beyond the pain and suffering we so staunchly oppose.

Less than a month ago the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Justice and State acknowledged the threat posed by wildlife trafficking to both conservation and national security, and released an implementation plan for the “National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking.” Organized crime has capitalized on the lucrative industry that is riddled with loopholes and enforcement shortcomings. Like almost all other offenses involving animals, wildlife trafficking is linked to other black market crimes, like drugs, human trafficking, and firearms. Each individual state should independently support the United States' mission to end the illegal trade of ivory.

Oregon's animals are fortunate to have citizens, represented by the legislature, that prioritize animal welfare, resulting in the state's position at the forefront of animal protection legislation. We have inspired neighboring states to strengthen their animal cruelty statutes in leading by example. In joining the growing force fighting the ivory trafficking industry, this bill enables us

to protect animals on other continents and motivate other states to do the same. Any ivory crossing into Oregon represents the “pain, stress, fear and suffering” of the animal it originally belonged to and, for as long as ivory products are welcomed into our towns and cities, the cruelty is perpetuated. Removing the demand in Oregon is a small, albeit an important, step towards rendering these practices obsolete.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Harmon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Sharon Harmon
Executive Director, Oregon Humane Society
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(503) 416-2992

Additional references:

<http://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ID=7951DFF8-CE81-2693-CFBF3FE6BF8BC905>

<http://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Environmental-crime/Projects/Project-Wisdom>

<http://www.cites.org/eng/app/index.php>

<http://www.cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php>

<https://www.animallaw.info/article/lacey-act-americas-premier-weapon-fight-against-unlawful-wildlife-trafficking>