



OREGON STATE SENATE

May 20, 2015
House Committee on Judiciary
Support SB 913

Chair Barker and members of the committee:

When an elephant is hunted for its tusks, poachers rely on machine guns and poison darts. Elephants die a cruel and often agonizing, painful death. In 2014, poachers killed 30,000 in Africa.

There are about a half million African elephants left on that continent, down from five million in the 1930s and 1940s. The ivory is shipped all over the world, mostly to Asia but also in large amounts to the US.

SB 913 would ban the sale of ivory in Oregon, a state with a strong conservation spirit and a love for wildlife. It includes exemptions for antiques and educational collections.

There are already federal regulations designed to stop sales of ivory.

So, why do we need a state law? Our federal laws on ivory trade are confusing and ineffective. Those laws treat different kinds of ivory differently. Only experts can tell the difference between different species. This leads to consumer confusion and misrepresentation on the part of ivory traders.

Federal bans on ivory are difficult to enforce because they're limited to interstate and international commerce. This means law enforcement's hands are tied when it comes to trafficking within state borders.

The bill doesn't go into effect until 2017 – this gives time for people who deal in this to trade away their supplies.

This bill doesn't apply to antiques or firearms obtained before 1976.

If you possess ivory items – this law won't affect you. If you give those items away or if others inherit them, this law won't affect them. The ivory police will not come and search your home.

It really only is designed for retail sales of ivory and rhino horns, designed to add another layer of law enforcement capacity in this trade.

Another reason for a state law: it continues to raise the awareness of people that poaching of these great beasts continues every single day and is on the increase. It

Here in Oregon, we have a long tradition of advancing animal welfare. Oregonians have supported our efforts to ban the cruel practice of horse tripping and the ownership of exotic pets. Now it is time to extend the conservation spirit to the majestic creatures of Africa and Asia.

Humans can live without ivory. Elephants cannot.

