



April 17, 2017

Dear Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislature,

I am writing to oppose HR 3429, which would remove protections for some of the species covered by Measure 100, the ballot measure passed overwhelmingly by voters last fall and supported by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

AZA's 232 accredited aquariums, nature centers, science centers and zoos annually see more than 186 million visitors, collectively generate more than \$17 billion in annual economic activity, and support more than 175,000 jobs across the country. We work in concert with Congress, state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, the private sector and the general public to conserve our wildlife heritage. Zoos and aquariums have a long history of saving species including the bison, California condor, black footed ferret, and aquatic species like the desert pupfish, freshwater mussels, and the partula snail.

We are as committed to conserving wildlife heritage in other countries as we are to conserving native species. One of the greatest threats to endangered animals like elephants, rhinos and sharks is poaching and illicit trafficking in endangered species products like ivory, rhino horn and shark fins. HB 3429 would amend and reduce the list of species covered by Measure 100 by covering only those species listed on either Appendix I or Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) or that are listed as vulnerable, endangered, critically endangered, extinct in the wild or extinct on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. As a result, the legislation would significantly reduce the number of shark and ray species originally covered by Measure 100. Rays and sharks play important roles in ocean health, with sharks being one of the top predators in ocean ecosystems. It is vital that that these protections remain in place so that Oregon and the United States do not contribute to the threats already facing shark and ray species and instead support policies that contribute to the conservation of ocean wildlife.

AZA-accredited facilities, including our Oregon members, are uniquely able to connect people with iconic species and engage them in conservation issues that these animals face in their natural ranges. The AZA is proud to join with its members to advance this important cause at both the federal and state levels. Therefore, I urge you to oppose HB 3429 and any other legislation that would seek to reduce protections against wildlife trafficking.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristin L. Vehrs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristin L. Vehrs
Executive Director