



Submission from Dr Fiona Woodhouse (please obscure email address)

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Hon Kenneth Leung
Chairperson
Bills Committee
Legislative Council
Hong Kong

CAP 586 Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants (Amendment) Bill 2017

Dear Bills Committee,

I write to express my support for the proposed amendments to CAP 586 and encourage the members of the Bills Committee to continue to support their enactment.

It is extremely important for the maximum penalties under this ordinance to be increased significantly to ensure that the individuals and criminal networks that exploit endangered species and profit tremendously from their illegal trade are suitably punished when caught and held to account.

Historically with generally low penalties applied for committing wild life crime the rewards have far outweighed the downside - offering little deterrent. The proposed amendments and subsequent higher penalties will correct this.

The proposed ivory trade ban is long overdue and I fully support this due to the severe impact the ivory trade in general has had on elephant populations in Africa - Hong Kong should no longer have any role in this deadly trade.

The legal trade encourages illegal trade and smuggling, and illegal ivory can be laundered through the legal trade.

Elephant populations in different African countries have declined dramatically over recent years with an increased global demand for ivory and the resultant poaching, and illegal trade being key factors in the decline of this iconic species.

Elephants suffer horribly when killed by poachers for their tusks, young are orphaned and can starve to death. There is a human toll also - people working in the frontline of elephant protection can be targeted. Rangers are shot at - some are injured, some are killed - families and communities are impacted.

Compensation should not be paid to ivory traders - this would have a paradoxical effect in stimulating ivory related crime and the killing of elephants as criminal networks would try to source more ivory and smuggle it in to Hong Kong to benefit from a large pay out from the Hong Kong Government.

Many Hong Kong people do not buy or possess ivory, many like myself are actively against the trade in ivory. As a Hong Kong tax payer I do not support the use of government funds in this way.

When the amendments are enacted I hope that the legal possession of ivory and legal antique trade will continue to be monitored and that additional measures to assist with control are introduced should they be needed. The trade in mammoth ivory may also be used as a laundering mechanism for elephant ivory and this will need to be monitored and appropriate action taken as required.

Kind regards,

Dr Fiona Woodhouse