



The Hong Kong Veterinary Association Ltd

Hon Kenneth Leung
Chairperson
Bills Committee
Legislative Council
Hong Kong

25th August 2017

Dear Hon. Kenneth Leung

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

In June the Hong Kong Veterinary Association contacted the Environmental Affairs Panel to express its support for the proposed amendments to CAP 586 that will improve the protection of endangered species.

We are delighted that the proposed amendment has progressed to the next stage and is currently being considered by this Bills Committee. We ask that the Bills Committee also support this amendment.

Wildlife crime is a conservation and an animal welfare issue – with wild populations being extirpated and animals targeted suffering greatly either when killed for their body parts or when being captured, transported and traded for the illegal wildlife trade.

Wildlife crime is also a human issue with many people impacted by the violence and intimidation that individuals and organised networks use on a daily basis especially in the field. Rangers, law-enforcement officers and advocates working on the frontline may be directly targeted – some have been injured and others murdered. This human toll has a massive impact on individual families and communities.

We support the proposed increase in penalties.

The proposed increase in maximum penalties and removing the differentiation between commercial and so called “non-commercial” will help to ensure that criminals are adequately punished for wildlife crimes. It will also act as a strong deterrent to those who may be tempted to participate in what has historically been an area of crime where ill-gotten gains can be high and the risks low.

We also support the measures proposed to halt the import and re-export of ivory (and elephant hunting trophies) and welcome the plan to implement a long overdue ban on the domestic ivory trade.

Legal ivory trade anywhere in the world encourages the poaching and slaughter of elephants.

We are against compensation being paid to ivory traders.

We note that during recent discussions some parties have asked that compensation be paid to ivory traders. Hong Kong paying compensation would set a disastrous precedent – reinforcing the concept that ivory is a valuable commodity. This would encourage more poaching and elephant slaughter as criminal networks attempt to continue to exploit the so-called legitimate Hong Kong market even as it closes down. Stockpiling would likely occur in countries where closure of the trade is also being considered in the hope that they too will be pressured into following Hong Kong's lead. Paying compensation would only lead to the slaughter of more elephants, the murder of more people and a general increase in criminal activity.

Yours Sincerely

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The Executive Committee of the HKVA