



Ivory Ban Bill - please pass without compensation

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Hon Kenneth Leung
Room 918, Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Hon Kenneth Leung,
Public Hearing on September 6th 2017: Cap 586 Amendment Bill

By way of background, my name is Sabita Prakash and I am Indian but permanent resident in Hong Kong since 1998. I have long been a fan of Hong Kong's vibrancy, efficiency and rule of law. I believe that Hong Kong's greatest asset is its ability to remain ahead of the times and think far into the future. At the moment, the need of the hour is clearly the urgent need to preserve our eco system and environment as best as we can for our future generations.

In this regard, I am writing to commend and support the Hong Kong Government's proposed Cap 586 Amendment Bill – as a vegetarian, I have tremendous respect for allowing Nature to prevail, which includes preventing cruelty to animals who I regard as living creatures who should be treated with respect and dignity.

I fully support the government's three-step plan to ban the Hong Kong ivory trade; and its proposals to increase maximum penalties under the Protection of Endangered Species Ordinance (Cap 586).

However, I do not support any proposition to compensate traders or buy out their stocks. My reasons are below:

- Providing any form of compensation will signal that Hong Kong is 'buying' ivory. I fear this will likely trigger a surge of poaching, thereby harming rather than helping the Government's cause
- Compensation would establish a dangerous global precedent for other countries working to ban the trade.
- I don't think the ivory owners will be dramatically out of pocket that they need to be compensated. Indeed, the Hong Kong Government is not depriving ivory owners of all use of property.
- Indeed, I would argue that the ivory controversy has been going on for a long time now, so traders and others who have speculated on ivory have done so, fully cognizant of the risks, implying they have had enough time to find alternate livelihood.
- The heritage value and traditional skills of carvers are not a reason to continue the trade. While they probably need to be rehabilitated, allowing them to continue the trade just because they always have, is not the answer
- Carvers and traders have had over two decades since the international ban, to diversify and/or switch trades. Its not that these measures to prohibit are being initiated only now.

I am very hopeful that the government will be able to do the right thing by the elephants. Kudos to your efforts in advance.

Sincerely Yours,

Sabita

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