

Public Hearing on September 6th 2017: Cap 586 Amendment Bill

Dear Hon Kenneth Leung,

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I am Michelle Wehry and I've been living in HK for 17 years. I am writing to express my support for the Hong Kong Government's proposed Cap 586 Amendment Bill because today, ivory poaching has reached unprecedented levels driven by demand in Asia. If nothing is done, the African elephant populations in the wild will become extinct in our lifetime.

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 as stated:-

- ● Providing any form of compensation will signal that Hong Kong is 'buying' ivory, likely triggering a surge of poaching in Africa.
- ● Compensation would establish a dangerous global precedent for other countries working to ban the trade.
- ● The Hong Kong Government is not depriving ivory owners of all use of property.
- ● Traders and others who have speculated on ivory have done so, knowing the risks of a shrinking legal market.
- ● The heritage value and traditional skills of carvers are not a reason to continue the trade.
- ● Carvers and traders have had over two decades since the international ban, to diversify and/or switch trades. Most have done so.

Sincerely Yours,

Michelle Wehry