



**Statement of
Jo-Anne R Basile, Executive Director,
Connecticut Votes for Animals
in Support of HB 5104
Joint Committee on the Environment
February 21, 2020**

The Honorable Senator Christine Cohen, Co-Chair, State Representative Mike Demicco, Co-Chair, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members and Members of the Environment Committee

Connecticut Votes for Animals, an animal advocacy organization representing more than 5,000 CT residents, strongly support policies that involve Connecticut's participation in saving imperiled animals from needless slaughter, including trophy hunting, poaching and wildlife trafficking. Accordingly, CVA strongly supports HB 5104 An Act Prohibiting the Import, Sale and Possession of African Elephants, Lions, Leopards, Black Rhinoceros, White Rhinoceros and Giraffes.

"Trophy hunting," the type of hunting targeted by this Act, is defined as killing wild animals for body parts but not primarily for food or sustenance. The parts, or whole pieces such as heads and antlers, are mostly used for home and office display and decoration. The activity is often fueled by competitive purposes whereby awards are granted for specific and voluminous kills across the globe. In the ten years ending 2014, US based hunters imported more than 1.26 million wildlife trophies. It is interesting to note for the Committee that during a similar time frame, CT hunters were issued more than 100 hunting licenses by the USFWS for Africa's most majestic animals – lions, leopards, elephants and giraffe.

The USFWS considers all of the "Big Six" species (identified above) endangered or threatened except for the giraffe, which is now classed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as "vulnerable to extinction." Additionally, arguments that trophy hunting generates revenues for remote areas are flawed, as it has been estimated that a pittance, only 3%, of expenditures, actually funds conservation or development. A lack of monitoring and enforcement in host countries, and the growing evidence that trophy hunting creates a legal market for poachers are all reasons to enact HB 5104.

Recent reversals by the Federal Administration of protections for endangered African wildlife put the most vulnerable species on the brink of extinction. CT residents do not want to be a part of that plan and HB 5104 allows Connecticut with the opportunity to do its part in protecting vulnerable species from needless slaughter.

CVA applauds the Committee's actions last year when it overwhelmingly supported a similar bill, SB 20. CVA trusts your commitment remains strong and the Committee will once again act favorably on HB 5104.

On behalf of CVA's members, thank you for the opportunity to present our views to the Committee.