



Statement of
Jo-Anne Basile, Executive Director
Connecticut Votes for Animals
Before the Environment Committee
March 6, 2020

Support for SB 294, An Act Concerning the Sale and Trade of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn in Connecticut
In Opposition to HB 5337 An Act Concerning the Processing of Rabbits for Consumption

The Honorable Co-Chair Christine Cohen and Co-Chair Mike Demicco, Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

CT Votes for Animals (CVA) is a grass roots animal advocacy organization representing over 5,000 citizens across the State of Connecticut. CVA members care deeply that Connecticut provides a safe and humane environment for all its animals. CVA speaks up for animals as a reminder to the public that a compassionate world is good for all and one in which we should all want to live.

CVA supports SB 294 An Act Concerning the Sale and Trade of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn in Connecticut with amendments proposed by the Humane Society of the United States. CVA believes the amendments are needed to ensure loopholes do not undermine the central protections of the bill.

Legislation to curtail the black market in ivory has come before this Committee in almost each of the past five years. And every time final action is not taken, we risk the lives of a dwindling population of elephants and rhinoceros. These majestic animals are dying in record numbers as poachers and the illegal wildlife traffic trade are fueled by the black-market demand. Lest we think we are immune from culpability, the smugglers find ways to circumvent federal officials, as long as there is a lucrative market waiting within the states. New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire and other states around CT have either passed or are seriously considering passing laws to block this illegal trade. CT has a responsibility to join the other states. CVA asks the Environment Committee to consider passage of SB 294 with important loophole closing amendments, this year.

In Opposition to HB 5337 An Act Concerning the Processing of Rabbits for Consumption
CVA opposes HB 5337 for several reasons. First, we understand the purpose of this bill is to reduce the regulations on rabbit slaughter for food consumption. CT should not be reducing regulatory oversight when it comes to food products. Given the explosive outbreak of the coronavirus from a live animal food market in China, reducing regulations should be the last thing the Committee should consider. Secondly, CVA opposes any efforts that would increase the use of rabbits for consumption. CVA wants to associate our position with that

of Ms. Marlene Wilhelm, a member of CVA's Advisory Committee and President of House Rabbit Connection. As Ms. Wilhelm's testimony clearly states rabbits are now the 3rd largest domestic pet after dogs and cats. This significant increase in rabbits as pets has been coupled with a strong movement to protect rabbits from inhumane breeding, removing them from cosmetic testing and stopping the use of their fur in the clothing industry. CVA urges the Committee to rethink this bill and work to protect rabbits as the beloved pet they have become.

On behalf of CVA, thank you for the opportunity to provide our views to the Committee to support SB 294 with appropriate amendments and to oppose HB 5337.

Jo-Anne Basile
Executive Director
CT Votes for Animals
info@ctvotesforanimals.org