



**HUMANE SOCIETY
VETERINARY MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION.**

3 February 2022

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Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
Maryland Legislature
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: VETERINARY SUPPORT for HB 52/SB 381, the *Wildlife Trafficking Prevention Act*

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and Committee Members:

We are writing on behalf of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association (HSVMA) to convey our strong support for HB 52/SB 381--the *Wildlife Trafficking Prevention Act*--legislation that would prohibit the illegal trade in parts and products of imperiled species, such as elephant ivory and rhino horn, in Maryland.

HSVMA is a national association of approximately 9,000 veterinary professionals—including more than 230 Maryland members—focused on the health and welfare of all animals, including free-roaming wildlife species. To address these welfare concerns, we also support the conservation of at-risk species, preservation of habitat for these iconic animals, and healthy ecosystem balance which can only be achieved if populations of wild animals are not cruelly and arbitrarily killed for profit.

Current federal law prohibits the import, export, trade or interstate commercial transport of ivory. Absence or weakness of state laws addressing these issues affords sellers of wildlife products continued access to American markets. Thus, states still have a critical role to play regarding *intrastate* sales within their borders.

By banning the wildlife parts and products trade in Maryland, the state will help to end the cruel practice of poaching, reduce inhumane and wasteful killing of threatened and iconic wildlife species, and promote an ethic of respect for wild animals. It will also ensure that Maryland residents do not unwittingly contribute to poaching and the illegal wildlife trade.

With passage of HB 52/SB 381, Maryland will join a dozen states--California, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington--and the District of Columbia, all of whom have enacted laws closing their markets to illegally acquired parts and products of imperiled species.



We strongly urge you and your colleagues in the Maryland legislature to demonstrate your humane leadership by supporting passage of HB 52/SB 381.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Nikhil Joshi, VMD

Carrie Waters, DVM, PhD, JD, DACVIM

HSVMA Maryland State Representatives