

USA
SHELDRIK
WILDLIFE TRUST

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January 19, 2022

RE: Support for House Bill 52

Dear House Environment and Transportation Committee,

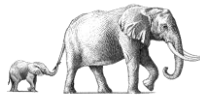
The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust is writing today to express our strong support for the passage of House Bill 52 that would put important safeguards in place to severely limit wildlife trafficking practices, resulting in further protection at the state level for many of the world's most treasured and iconic species- specifically the elephant and rhinoceros.

The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust (DSWT) is best known for its work in rehabilitating and hand-raising orphaned elephants and rhinos, largely as a result of poaching. DSWT has a significant presence and following in the United States, with more than 1,000 dedicated supporters residing in Maryland who share our commitment to preserving wildlife.

Ivory tusks that have no purpose to an individual other than to be carved into a statue or trinket, are helping to drive a multi-billion dollar industry in domestic goods, resulting in a staggering 66% drop in elephant population in the last 40 years. The recent Elephant Census Survey conducted over Africa in 2016 revealed that just over 350,000 elephants remain, a far worse outcome and reality than conservationists had imagined. Elephants and rhinos are in grave danger, and we have the ability to put an end to their crisis.

HB 52 will put into place important measures that offer an added level of protection to elephants like tiny "Barsilinga" (pictured right), who at only two weeks old, was found at the side of his mother who had endured fatal gun shots to her chest and legs. Her tragic death is a grizzly reminder of the suffering attached to each piece of ivory that is sold and bought. Barsilinga continues to recover at the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, however to this day carries deep emotional wounds and memories related to his mother's tragic passing.





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As the United States remains a top market for wildlife goods with more than 1/3 of products imported illegally, it is our duty as responsible humans, to offer protection for those that cannot protect themselves from enemies they have no chance of defeating alone. We strongly urge you to support bill HB52 in an effort to safeguard species that have just as much right to inhabit this planet as humans.

If you have any further questions or would like more information about how HB 52 can protect little rhinos and elephants like Barsilinga, please feel free to contact me directly at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Melissa L. Sciacca
Executive Director
David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust USA
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