

May 17, 2018

Senator Henry Stern
California State Capitol
1315 10th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Letter of Support from Born Free USA on Senate Bill 1487

Dear Senator Stern,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support of California Senate Bill 1487. My name is Prashant K. Khetan, Esq., and I am the CEO and General Counsel of Born Free USA, a non-profit organization that seeks to end the suffering of wild animals in captivity, rescue individual animals in need, and protect wildlife in their natural habitats – by keeping wildlife in the wild and encouraging compassionate conservation globally. Born Free is an industry leader in the anti-wildlife trafficking movement, having devoted years to advocating for major reform in wildlife trade, both in the United States and internationally.

On behalf of Born Free and its California supporters, we would like to support the proposed Senate Bill 1487, Iconic African Species Protection Act. Born Free supports passage of this Bill, which would prohibit the possession of specified African species and any part, product, offspring, or the dead body or parts thereof, including, but not limited to, the African elephant or the black rhinoceros. As with similar bills passed in other states, S.B. 1487 has appropriate exceptions and contains criminal penalties for violations. Not only is this Bill a compassionate solution to real problems of poaching and potential extinction of some of the world's most cherished species, but it is needed now more than ever, with the federal government's policies on importing trophies from international hunts in limbo.

As you are no doubt aware, poaching and hunting have decimated the most iconic species. For example, as few as 20,000 lions remain in the wild and tens of thousands of elephants are poached for their ivory each year. Wild rhino numbers in Africa are around 25,000, and more than 1,000 per year lose their lives to illegal killing in South Africa alone. Leopards have disappeared from most of their historic range due to habitat loss, and they face additional threats from demand for their pelts or other body parts. Sadly, the list goes on.

Unfortunately, the United States is a major destination for many of these parts and products, so there is a real need for legislative solutions, and particularly so at the state level. By passing S.B. 1487, the legislature can help manage the global poaching crisis and send a strong message that California will not tolerate illegal wildlife trafficking.

Due to Born Free's extensive knowledge of the consequences of illegal trade in wildlife parts and products, we respectfully request that you pass Senate Bill 1487.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Prashant K. Khetan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Prashant K. Khetan
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