

From: Office of the Governor Site Support
Sent: 1/6/2015 8:46:02 PM
To: Haley, Nikki
Cc:
Subject: State Ivory Bans Persecute Innocent People, Violate Federal Law

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January 6, 2015

1205 Pendleton Street
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Dear Governor Haley,

Animal rights groups are pushing for Ivory Bans that hurt innocent Americans and waste law enforcement resources. These bans are based on bad science that falsely link African elephant poaching with terrorism, exaggerate the threat of elephant extinction, and ultimately hurt African elephant populations by ignoring the needs of local African communities that host elephants.

While these issues are debated at the federal level, animal rights groups are pushing individual states to enact ivory bans before all of the evidence can be considered. Already, New York and New Jersey have enacted over broad ivory bans that conflict with federal law and invite overzealous enforcement.

Two of the first known victims of the NY Ivory Ban prove this point. Plain clothes agents from the New York Department of Environmental Conservation busted two small business vendors at the Pier Antique Show the weekend before Thanksgiving. Instead of pursuing international smugglers and crime syndicates, they went after:

- A 72 year old jewelry maker living on Social Security from the Carolinas who supplements her income selling jewelry at trade shows. Agents seized 2 necklace/earring sets made from mammoth beads, an ivory bracelet, a pin and a third set of earrings valued at approximately \$1,400.00.

- A folk art dealer who sold "teethers" - crudely carved sticks of whale bone or ivory that sailors made in the 1800s for teething babies to chew on. About \$250 of these items were seized by agents who first posed as buyers, then swooped in and rummaged through his entire stock when he confirmed he thought the items were made from whale ivory.

Both of these trade show vendors have been summoned to appear in NY court for violating the state's ivory ban. According to NY state officials, they may face \$5000 fines if convicted.

This is exactly the kind of overzealous law enforcement that the President's Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking promised would not take place under a domestic ivory ban. Instead of pursuing Chinese criminal syndicates that fuel African elephant poaching, the government is persecuting small businesses trading ivory from extinct species or that had been legally imported long before the recent surge in African elephant poaching. Law enforcement boosts its enforcement statistics at the expense of innocent Americans while poachers and criminals thrive on the illicit ivory trade.

Please stop this action.

Please stop the trend of enacting state ivory bans that conflict with the Endangered Species Act and other federal laws. These bans hurt innocent Americans and waste precious resources that could stop poaching in Africa.

Sincerely,
John Cordle