



To: **Honorable Members of the Environment Committee**
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **SB 20 – An Act Prohibiting the Import, Sale and Possession of African Elephants, Lions, Leopards, Black Rhinoceros, White Rhinoceros and Giraffes**

Position: **Oppose**

Date: **February 15, 2019**

Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

I write today to express the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation's (CSF) opposition to Senate Bill 20 (SB 20), legislation that would prohibit the import, sale and possession of African elephants, lions, leopards, black rhinoceros, white rhinoceros and giraffes.

While the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) supports efforts to curb poaching, we are fundamentally opposed to SB 20, as the sweeping restrictions detailed in these bills will have detrimental effects on wildlife conservation, ultimately hindering anti-poaching efforts, while simultaneously depriving rural communities of much-needed, hunting-related tourism dollars.

Since 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) has dedicated itself to the mission of working with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting and trapping. The unique and collective force of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus, and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses, working closely with CSF, and with the support of major hunting, recreational fishing and shooting, and trapping organizations, serves as an unprecedented network of pro-sportsmen elected officials that advance the interests of America's hunters and anglers.

CSF recognizes and commends the important role that hunters and anglers have towards ensuring the sustainability of wildlife populations. It also recognizes the challenges associated with

developing policies that regulate the taking and trade of wildlife across multiple administrative and regulatory jurisdictions, particularly in the context of international trade and commerce. SB 20 provides a simple approach to a complicated issue, and would have far-reaching and unintended consequences that will negatively impact the conservation of the very species these bills purport to protect. Further, this bill will adversely affect the people and communities that rely on the tourism dollars generated by sport hunting for their very existence.

In the United States, we are fortunate to have the guiding principles of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation to protect and promote the sustainable use of our fish and wildlife resources. The application of these principles is made possible through the American System of Conservation Funding, a “user-pays, public-benefits” system, which provides the capital to implement professional, science-based fish and wildlife management throughout the nation. In other parts of the world, and Africa specifically, regulated trophy hunting is the primary driver for conservation funding, wildlife management and anti-poaching efforts.

Revenue generated by licensed, regulated safari hunting is the single most important source of funding for conservation and anti-poaching efforts in Africa. In many Southern and Eastern African countries, revenues generated from licensed, regulated hunting are the primary source of management, conservation, and anti-poaching funds for national wildlife authorities. These hunting programs have been designed by experts to allow a limited, sustainable offtake, and to generate funds for conservation, anti-poaching, and community incentives. This system has helped recover or maintain “Big 5” populations in Southern and Eastern Africa. In turn, SB 20 would significantly deprive African nations of critical conservation resources by unnecessarily restricting the ability of American citizens to participate in trophy hunting.

In 2016, New Jersey became the first state to pass legislation (SB 977 and SB 978) specifically targeting lawfully harvested hunting trophies and banning the importation and possession of several “Big 5” species by residents of New Jersey. On July 8, 2016, Conservation Force and several partners filed a lawsuit to enjoin the recently passed legislation, arguing that the new ban is preempted by Section 6(f) of the Endangered Species Act. Although they opposed the suit, the defendants conceded that the legislation could not be enforced against federally authorized or permitted imports. On August 29, 2016, Federal District Court Judge Wolfson entered a judgment against the State, thus overturning the importation and possession ban on the “Big 5” species.

Hampering the ability of sportsmen and women to pursue an important tradition alienates the conservation community. It hinders efforts to effectively manage wildlife abroad and simultaneously deprives African nations of the critical resources needed to effectively control poaching. CSF supports efforts to eliminate poaching and curb the trade of illegally and unethically acquired animal parts. However, given the inevitable and unintended consequences this legislation would have, the statutory changes outlined in this bill would not achieve this laudable goal.

For this reason, we strongly encourage you to oppose SB 20.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph D. Mullin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a distinct 'D'.

Joseph Mullin
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