



## **Senate Bill Would Protect Ivory Owners and African Elephants**

Senators Daines (R-MT) and Alexander (R-TN) introduced S 1769, the *African Elephant Conservation and Legal Ivory Possession Act of 2015*. Companion legislation to HR 697 in the House of Representatives, this bill would end the US Fish and Wildlife Service's unilateral moratorium on the importation, exportation and sale of lawfully possessed ivory. It also strengthens measures to stop elephant poaching in Africa and punishes countries that smuggle illicit ivory. [Write To Your Senators](#) asking them to co-sponsor this bill.

The legislation would allow:

- Lawfully possessed, raw or worked ivory to be imported or exported, purchased or sold for museum displays and personal use;
- The Secretary of the Interior, in coordination with the Secretary of State, to place a U.S. Fish and Wildlife law enforcement officer in each African country with significant elephant populations;
- The Secretary of the Interior to certify any country found to be a significant transit or destination point under the Pelly Amendment to the Fishermen's Protective Act;
- The continued importation of sport-hunted elephant trophies from populations listed on Appendix II of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species;
- For the reauthorization of appropriations of not more than \$5 million for each of the years 2016-2020, and for these funds to be prioritized for projects designed to facilitate the acquisition of equipment and training of wildlife officials in ivory producing countries for anti-poaching efforts.

The bill would prevent USFWS from promulgating or enforcing regulations designed to criminalize ownership or commercial use of African elephant ivory that has been legally imported into the United States. It would do away with impossible documentation requirements imposed by USFWS Director's Order 210, and it would shift the burden of proof that ivory was illegally imported back to the government.

At the same time, this bill would strengthen USFWS's ability to stop elephant poaching in Africa. Instead of punishing innocent Americans with a domestic ivory ban, an absurdly indirect attempt to change attitudes in China about illicit ivory, this bill focuses on fighting poachers in Africa to save elephants. The bill authorizes placement of USFWS law enforcement officers in each African elephant range country. That officer would assist local wildlife rangers protect African elephants and help apprehend those who illegally kill or assist in the illegal killing of African elephants.

To further protect elephants and punish countries that import poached ivory, the bill would require the Secretary of the Interior to certify to the President any country that, directly or indirectly, is a significant transit or destination point for illegal ivory trade. Doing so would trigger other appropriate diplomatic and legal responses that pressure law breaking countries to stop violating international law and fueling the African elephant poaching problem. The bill also requires the secretary to prioritize projects in support of this law in the Secretary's annual budget.

Ask your senators to support S 1769 by cosponsoring this bill! [Write To Your Senators](#) The more Senators who co-sponsor and support this bill, the more likely it is that the bill will be packaged with other legislation and become law.