



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

22nd November 2021

Jean Contreant,

RE: THE IVORY ACT

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding the *Ivory Act*. I have read your comments on this important issue with interest.

Robust action is needed to protect one of the world's most iconic and treasured species - ivory should never be seen as a commodity for financial gain or a status symbol. I am therefore glad that the *Ivory Act 2018* will introduce one of the world's toughest bans on ivory sales. This includes a ban on the purchase or hire of items containing elephant ivory and applies to UK exports and imports. The ban will cover items of all ages and the maximum available penalty for contravention will be an unlimited fine or up to five years in prison. The ban will also include certain narrowly defined exemptions for items that do not contribute to poaching, where a ban would be unwarranted.

While I am not aware of any plans for a surrender scheme at this time, I understand that some owners may decide it is not cost-effective to register their low value items for sale. These items may instead be gifted, donated, or bequeathed, rather than discarded. Ministers have committed to an awareness raising campaign to explain to owners their options.

Ministers will soon be taking the next steps to implement the relevant secondary legislation, in line with the Government's recent consultation response. I understand that progress on implementation was delayed by a legal challenge which the Government successfully defended. Ministers have also consulted separately on extending the *Ivory Act* to afford greater protections to a range of ivory-bearing species, including hippopotamuses and walruses, and I look forward to reading the Government's official response to this once this has been published.

I am also encouraged that since 2015, DEFRA has provided over £4.2 million in funding for Asian elephants living in the wild through the Darwin Initiative and the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund. This includes funding towards a project seeking to reduce the illegal ivory trade in Cambodia, and a project supporting Nepal's world-leading community anti-poaching efforts.

This ban will build on work to tackle poaching and the illegal ivory trade. I am pleased to have been elected on a manifesto which committed to banning the import of hunting trophies from



endangered species and Ministers intend to implement this, as well as end the advertising for sale in the UK of low welfare experiences abroad, through the upcoming *Animals Abroad Bill*.

Banning ivory sales will reaffirm the UK's global leadership on this critical issue, demonstrating our belief that this abhorrent trade should become a thing of the past.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pursglove', with a horizontal line underneath.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**