

DIANNE FEINSTEIN
CALIFORNIA



COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY - RANKING MEMBER
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

United States Senate

November 21, 2017

Secretary Ryan Zinke
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

I write today in strong opposition to lifting the ban on the importation of African elephant “trophies” from Zimbabwe and Zambia. Last week, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service published a finding in the Federal Register, stating that the killing of trophy animals in Zimbabwe “will enhance the survival of the African elephant.” I am deeply concerned by this finding, and ask that you reconsider this move, and base your final decision on the scientific evidence and information available.

African elephants are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, and their numbers have plunged from around five million in the early 20th Century to merely 415,000 today. Last week’s decision reverses the agency’s own 2014 ban on the importation of such trophies, which was made after the Fish and Wildlife Service concluded that there was not sufficient information to make an enhancement finding. It is certainly not appropriate to make policy changes that place African elephants further at risk of extinction.

African elephants are iconic creatures that should be preserved for future generations. In order to save the African elephants in existence today, nations have banded together in an effort to preserve the species. The United States has joined these efforts, and Congress has enacted numerous laws to protect these animals and their habitat. We must support these efforts, not undermine them. Specifically, I ask that you continue to ban the importation of African elephant trophies into the United States. Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

CC: Greg Sheehan, Principal Deputy Director, United States Fish and Wildlife Service
DF:jp