**Letter to the editor #1**

Dear editor:

I am writing to express my deep concern about the looming extinction of African elephants and the market demand for their ivory that is fueling the senseless killing of these animals. More than 35,000 elephants were killed last year. If the killing rate continues, some experts estimate that African elephants could be extinct in the next few decades. Ivory trade is cruel. Poachers often brutally hack off the face of elephants to retrieve the tusk since one third of the tusk is hidden in the animal’s skull. Last year poachers in Zimbabwe resorted to poisoning water holes with cyanide, killing several hundred elephants as well as other animals that drank the water or fed on poisoned elephant carcasses. Elephants will continue to be poached unless we address the market demand for their ivory. S. 7194, legislation introduced by Senator Lanza, will prohibit sale and trade of ivory and end New York’s dubious role in the ivory trade. Time is running out as our legislative session will end in a few weeks. I strongly urge _____ (Legislator) to cosponsor or support S. 7194 and demonstrate our environmental responsibility to safeguard the survival of one of the most majestic animals on earth.

**Letter to the editor #2**

Dear editor:

Recently I learned of a shocking fact – that New York has the largest market for ivory in the U.S. and that the legal market provides a cover for illicit ivory from poached elephants. The ivory trade has decimated the elephant populations. Only less than 50,000 Asian elephants are left in the wild. The population of African elephants has been halved during the past few decades with less than half a million left. Some say as many as 50,000 elephants were killed last year and if the killing rate goes unabated, African elephants could be extinct in as little as a few decades. The devastating impact of the ivory trade goes beyond the possible extinction of elephants. Terrorist groups and armed militias in Africa have engaged in elephant poaching and used the profits from sale of elephant tusks to fund their atrocities. Sadly, by providing a vibrant market for ivory, New York is complicit in sustaining the ivory trade that is fueling the killing of the elephants. I urge _____ (legislator) to support S. 7194 that will prohibit sales of ivory in New York. Ivory belongs to the elephants, not us.

**Letter to the editor #3**

Dear editor:

I am writing to express my strong support for S. 7194, legislation introduced by state Senator Lanza that will ban the ivory commerce. I am urging my elected officials, _______ (legislator), to cosponsor or support this important legislation. I am saddened by the fact that our state is the largest retail market for ivory in the U.S. and the U.S. is the second largest market for ivory in the world, only after China. Ivory is now dubbed “blood ivory” because of the involvement of Africa-based terrorist and militia groups like Al Qaeda affiliate, Al-Shabaab, in mass killing of elephants. Ivory commerce sustains criminal syndicates who undermine the rule of law, weaken local governance and breed corruption. New York’s’
burgeoning ivory market sends the wrong message that we endorse elephant killing. Criminal networks exploit loopholes and customs oversight to launder illicit ivory and sell them to unsuspecting customers. Only a ban on ivory commerce, as S. 7194 advocates, can we end our state’s complicit participation in sustaining the ivory trade and fueling the elephant poaching crisis. S. 7194 deserves our full support.

Letter to the editor #4

Dear editor:

New York has an opportunity to join the global effort to save elephants from the threat of extinction and end the cruel and blood ivory trade. S. 7194, sponsored by state Senator Lanza, would complement ongoing federal actions to combat the illegal ivory trade by prohibiting the sale and trade of ivory in the state of New York. Last year close to 100 elephants were killed every day, or one in every 15 minutes. If the killing rate continues, African elephants could be extinct in a few decades. Asian elephants are already highly endangered with less than 50,000 left in the wild. Because of the lucrative profits of the ivory commerce, the trade is used by criminal syndicates to raise funds for their activities. Africa-based terrorist and armed militia groups, such as Al-Shabaab, a Somalia-based Al-Qaeda affiliate, and Lord’s Resistance Army headed by fugitive warlord Joseph Kony are all funded by elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade. Proceeds from sale of tusks of the elephants that they poached provided a handsome financial bloodline to fund their atrocious activities. It behooves citizens and elected officials in New York, the state with the largest retail market for ivory in the nation, to step up to the plate and throw support behind S.7194 that will put a stop to this deadly, cruel ivory trade.

Letter to the editor #5

The global ivory trade is fueling massive killing of elephants. Every fifteen minutes an elephant is killed in Africa, close to 100 a day. In Central Africa, about 65 percent of forest elephants were killed in the last decade. Experts are concerned that elephants in Africa could be extinct in as little as two decades if the current poaching rate persists. New York is guilty in sustaining the trade as our state has the largest retail market for ivory in the U.S. Past investigations and prosecutions on wildlife trafficking show that legal market provides a cover for illicit ivory to be laundered and sold to unsuspecting customers. New York is proudly known for being the hub for global commerce. It would be a stain on our reputation to continue to be the hub for blood ivory commerce. State Senator Lanza’s S. 7194 will ensure that New York rids its ivory market and becomes a global leader in saving elephants from the deadly ivory trade. I am calling on _____ (legislator) and concerned citizens to support S. 7194.

Letter to the editor #6

Dear editor:

Last year New York became one of the first states to prohibit the sale of shark fins to save sharks from the cruel and unsustainable shark fin trade. This year we have an opportunity to end another cruel and devastating trade by prohibiting the sale of elephant ivory in our state. S.7194, sponsored by state Senator Lanza, is awaiting a swift passage in Albany before the legislative session ends in a few weeks.
Unbeknown to most, New York has the largest retail market for ivory in the country. The United States itself has the second largest market for ivory after China. Law enforcement and wildlife agencies have long been frustrated by the challenge of distinguishing legally acquired ivory such as antiques, from illegal ivory from recently poached elephants. Legal markets provide a cover to launder illicit ivory. During the past few decades, elephant populations in Africa have decreased by 50 percent. In Central Africa, population of forest elephants has decreased 65 percent in the last decade. Market demand for ivory, including here in New York, fuels the elephant poaching. The ivory trade also has devastating economic, social and political impacts on the local communities in Africa since the trafficking of ivory is facilitated by transnational criminal syndicates and Africa-based terrorist groups and armed militias have been engaged in elephant poaching. New York should do all that we can to cease our role in the blood ivory commerce. I urge _____ (legislator) to cosponsor or support S. 7194.

**Letter to the editor #7**

Dear editor:

I am writing today to show strong support for S. 7194, legislation introduced by state Senator Lanza, that will prohibit sale and trade of ivory in the state of New York. Efforts to curb demand for ivory and combat wildlife trafficking have received the highest levels of global political support in recent months. President Obama released a National Strategy for Combatting Wildlife Trafficking earlier this year after the issuance of an Executive Order last July. S. 7194 will complement the federal actions in closing the ivory market and demonstrate New York’s progressive leadership in assisting the federal and global efforts in saving the elephants. New York must act and lead. Not only because our state has the largest market for ivory in the country, but because similar efforts have sprung up in New Jersey, Hawaii and California where advocates and elected officials are observing closely how our state collectively responds to this important issue. I urge _____ (legislator) and concerned citizens of New York to support S. 7194. Elephants need ivory; we don’t.

**Letter to the editor #8**

Dear editor:

We are witnessing the largest scale of elephant massacre in decades – all to supply human greed for trinkets, jewelry, carvings made of ivory. While the United States has the second largest market for ivory after China, New York takes has the dubious distinction of being the largest market for ivory in the U.S. Fortunately, concerned advocates and elected officials are recognizing the urgent need to close our state’s market for ivory by supporting S. 7194 that will ban ivory commerce. The ivory trade is inherently cruel because entire families, even calves, are gunned down and poachers brutally hack off an elephant’s face to obtain the animal’s tusks. There is a heavy human toll as well. Over a thousand park rangers have been killed by poachers while on duty. Poachers are employing more deadly, powerful and technologically-advanced weapons to fight against park rangers and local wildlife enforcement efforts. New York should cease our dubious role in accelerating the decline of elephants by closing our market to ivory commerce. S.7194 is New York’s response to the elephant poaching crisis, not only for the sake
of the survival of elephants, but also for providing a responsible environmental stewardship for the next generation.

Letter to the editor #9

Dear editor:

One of the most urgent biodiversity crises in our lifetime is the looming extinction of elephants in the wild. But saving elephants is no longer just about saving these majestic animals. With the involvement of organized criminal syndicates in trafficking ivory, stopping ivory trade is also about protecting local communities and ensuring regional stability in Africa. There are confirmed reports that Africa-based terrorist groups and armed militia have engaged in elephant poaching and used the proceeds from the sale of elephant tusks to fund their nefarious activities. Eliminating their economic stranglehold in the ivory commerce is now a matter of the national security interests of the United States. New York has the largest retail market for ivory in the country and plays an imperative role in the growing global call for a ban on the ivory trade. S.7194, introduced by state Senator Lanza, prohibiting sale of ivory, should receive swift passage in Albany before the legislative session ends in a few weeks. Imagine what message would we send to the poachers and traffickers of illegal ivory and the rest of the world if New York failed to pass and enact this important legislation?

Letter to the editor #10

Dear editor:

Experts estimate that African elephants could be extinct in the next few decades if we don’t stop the current poaching rate. Elephants are being killed in massive numbers to supply the global demand for trinkets, carvings, jewelry made of ivory. New York has the largest market for ivory in the U.S. and our country is the second largest ivory market after China. Investigations show that illegal ivory is trafficked and sold here, masking as legally-acquired ivory. Transnational organized criminal networks are known to exploit legal loopholes to launder illicit ivory. Africa-based terrorist and armed militia groups engage in elephant poaching in order to take in lucrative profits from ivory sales to support their atrocious activities. The stakes are high, not just for the survival of elephants but also for the sake of the African regional security and the U.S. national security interests. It would be utterly irresponsible if we know that we are the largest ivory market in the U.S. but do nothing to assist with the national and global effort to curb elephant poaching crisis. S. 7194, introduced by the state Senator Lanza, will prohibit sales of ivory in New York. It is important that New York residents and lawmakers fully support S. 7194 to show that New York cares and acts to save the elephants. I urge ______ (legislator) to cosponsor or support S. 7194.