

Dear Elephant Lover and Advocate,

Thank you for your steadfast advocacy of elephants world-wide and here in Massachusetts. We would like to update you on the current status of the two pieces of elephant protection legislation currently under consideration on Beacon Hill.

The bill which would prohibit the use of elephants and other wild animals by the animal entertainment community operating in our state, *An Act Relative To The Use Of Elephants, Big Cats, Primates, Giraffes, And Bears in Traveling Exhibits And Shows* (S.2251/H.3376), now rests in the hands of the **Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Culture**. The other: *An Act Relative To Rhinoceros Horn And Ivory Trafficking* (S.576/H.903), would prohibit the sale of raw ivory and rhino horn. This bill is now in the **Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture**.

The ivory ban bill is the more contentious of the two and has always faced opposition from legislators from the south coast, particularly those representing New Bedford and Nantucket, where the scrimshaw carver and Nantucket Lightship Basket lobby is strong and influential. The substitution of elephant tusks for whalebone and teeth in these industries makes for stiff resistance to the banning of raw ivory, resulting in the consistent refusal of their representatives to support the ban.

The bill to prohibit the use of elephants and other exotic animals in traveling shows and circuses has wide bi-partisan support in both the Massachusetts House and Senate and has a better chance of finally being passed and made into law. Banning wild animal acts is popular statewide, particularly after the tragic deaths of two beloved elephants, Karen and Beulah, who died while performing at The Big E Fair in West Springfield, MA, in March and September of 2019, respectively, after years of abuse and neglect by their owners at the Commerford Bros. Traveling Zoo. Despite wide bi-partisan support of this legislation, past versions have been shelved in previous sessions. It is time for Massachusetts to join the six other states that have restricted or banned exotic animals in circuses or other traveling shows. As two *Boston Globe* reporters have written, "animals are not entertainers...bears don't dance, and elephants were not built to carry humans."

Calls and emails to your state senators and representatives can have a powerful impact on the fate of the bills. This is particularly true when they sit on a relevant committee considering these long-overdue protections. Hearing from all of us could mean the difference between the bills passing at long last or being shelved yet again. Calling is especially effective. Below are links to legislators' contact information:

You can find your state senator/representative here: <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>

You can find the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Culture here:
<https://malegislature.gov/Committees/Detail/J30/192>

And the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture here:
<https://malegislature.gov/Committees/Detail/J21/192>

Your advocacy matters. Taking a few minutes to call or email your reps and members of the two joint committees could help convince our legislators that Massachusetts must join the other states that have listened to their constituents and made elephant protections and preserving the species a priority. Letters to the committee chairs is probably the most effective way to voice your concerns (see contact info above). Time is running out for these crucial protections to make it out of committee; members are

in the process of determining which bills to endorse and which will never make it out of committee. Your voices could help legislators finally choose protection and preservation of the species over the horrific exploitation and rank consumerism of elephants (and elephant parts) currently allowed here in the Commonwealth.

Please check our website, www.massforelephants.org, to learn more about what is going on in the elephant world and to find resources for taking action to help protect and preserve elephants everywhere.

Stay tuned for further news. Many, many thanks to you all. If you would no longer like to receive our emails, reply with "unsubscribe" to this email. Stay safe and well.

Best wishes,

Glenna Waterman, Chairwoman of the Board

Massachusetts for Elephants (MFE)

www.massforelephants.org

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