March 14, 2018

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, PC
Minister of Environment & Climate Change
Centre Block, Suite 433C
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

Re: Canada and the Protection of Elephants

Elephanatics, a Canadian elephant advocacy organization, on behalf of the undersigned Canadian and international conservation and animal protection groups, scientists, Canadian Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assemblies, urges the Canadian government to take a global leadership role in the conservation of African and Asian elephants by closing Canada’s domestic elephant ivory trade.

In addition to the 95 signatories below, we have an online petition with well over 120,000 signatures of concerned citizens urging the government to take this step. A hard copy is available on request and the petition is at: http://bit.ly/ivoryfreecanada. This proves that even though elephants are not native to Canada, elephants are still important to many Canadians.

Results from four recent and independent scientific studies underline our concern about the survival of both Asian and African (savanna and forest) elephants.

- **Savanna** elephant populations declined by 30% between 2007 and 2014. The rate of decline accelerated during these years. At least 93% of savanna elephants in 18 countries were surveyed.¹

- **Forest** elephant numbers declined by 62% between 2002 and 2011 and lost 30% of their range.² Minkebi National Park in Gabon used to hold the most forest elephants in Central Africa. Scientists recorded a 78 - 81% decline in numbers between 2004 and 2014 due to poaching.³

- The **Asian** elephant population has declined by at least 50% in the last 60-75 years.⁴

Every year approximately 20,000 African elephants are killed for their ivory.⁵ Conservationists and scientists agree that they will disappear across much of their current range within our lifetimes if demand for their tusks is not reduced. The flow of illegal ivory through legal domestic markets is well documented. Japan’s largely unregulated domestic ivory market is contributing to illegal international trade, as documented in a 2017 report released by TRAFFIC (the wildlife trade monitoring network).⁶

There are excellent precedents that Canada can follow to close the domestic trade in elephant ivory. At the 2016 meeting of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) congress, it was overwhelmingly decided that globally, governments must close their legal domestic markets for elephant ivory as a matter of urgency. In August, 2016, France became the first European country to ban its domestic trade. Shortly thereafter China stunned the world by announcing a close of domestic trade by
December 2017, which it has done. The United Kingdom recently solicited feedback on a proposed
domestic ivory trade ban and was overwhelmed by more than 70,000 responses and 85% of them
supporting the ban.7

In January 2018, Hong Kong’s legislature voted in favour of banning all ivory sales by 2021. Taiwan will
soon announce a ban on domestic ivory sales starting in 2020. Singapore is considering a full ban. Because
the US Administration over-turned their ban on elephant trophy imports last week, there is additional onus
on the rest of the world to increase their efforts to protect elephants.

While Canada may not represent the largest market for elephant ivory, by banning the domestic trade it
signals to the international community that Canada is committed to leading the fight to save the world’s
most iconic keystone species.

We request the support of elephant conservation through the closure of all loopholes for the transit of
elephant ivory into and throughout Canada. More specifically we ask the government to:

1. ban all domestic trade of elephant ivory; and
2. make the import, export and re-export of all elephant ivory illegal, including raw ivory, worked
   ivory, ivory obtained through trophy hunting and ivory acquired prior to 1990.

Thank you for your consideration of our letter on this important issue. We would like to request a
telephone meeting to discuss this further. If you have any questions or require further information in order
to take action, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Signed,

[Signature]

Fran Duthie
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www.elephanatics.org

cc Dr Stephen Lucas, Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada

Canadian Organizations

Zoocheck
Patricia Zaat, Country Director, Canada
International Fund for Animal Welfare

Rob Laidlaw, Director
Zoocheck
Rebecca Aldworth, Executive Director  
Humane Society International/Canada  

Barbara Cartwright, CEO  
Canadian Federation of Humane Societies  

Debra Probert, Executive Director  
Vancouver Humane Society  

Dr. Sara Dubois, Chief Scientific Officer  
BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals  

Patricia Sims, Founder  
World Elephant Day  

Greg Gubitz, Chairman of the Board  
Big Life Foundation Canada  

Barry MacKay, Canadian Representative & Senior Program Associate, Born Free USA  

Andria Teather, Chief Executive Officer  
The Jane Goodall Institute of Canada
Heather Craig, President
Global March for Elephants & Rhinos – Toronto

Lesley Fox, Director
Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals

Ericka Ceballos, Founder
CATCA Environmental & Wildlife Society

Darren Colello, Wildlife Education Director
Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society

Camille Labchuk, Executive Director
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Stephanie Brown, Director
Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals

Liz White, Leader
Animal Alliance of Canada

Liz White, Director
Animal Protection Party of Canada
Canadian Members of Parliament & the Legislative Assembly

Hon. Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
MLA for Port Coquitlam
British Columbia New Democratic Party

Don Davies
MP for Vancouver Kingsway
British Columbia New Democratic Party

Jane Thornthwaite
MLA for North Vancouver-Seymour
British Columbia Liberal Party

Fin Donnelly
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Nathaniel Erskine-Smith
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International Organizations

Iris Ho, Program Manager – Wildlife
Humane Society International

Peter Knights, Chief Executive Officer
WildAid

Prashant Khetan, CEO & General Counsel
Born Free USA

Will Travers OBE, President
Howard Jones, Chief Executive Officer
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Cynthia Moss, Program Director
Amboseli Trust for Elephants

Petter Granli, President and CEO
ElephantVoices

Allan Thornton, OBE, President
Environmental Investigation Agency US

Will Travers OBE, President
Species Survival Network
Charles Knowles, President & Co-Founder  
Wildlife Conservation Network

Kaddu K Sebunya, President  
African Wildlife Foundation

Robert Brandford, Executive Director  
The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

Karen Botha, Chief Executive  
David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation

Charlie Mayhew, Chief Executive Officer  
Tusk Trust

Dr Max Graham, Founder & Chief Executive Officer  
Space for Giants

Jane Alexandra and Louise Ravula, Co-Founders  
Two Million Tusks UK

John Stephenson, Chief Executive Officer  
Stop Ivory
Marcelle Meredith, Executive Director
National Council of SPCAs South Africa

Liv Baker, Executive Director
Institute for Compassionate Conservation

Vera Weber, President and CEO
Fondation Franz Weber

Fiona Gordon, Director, Gordon Consulting
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Charlotte Nithart, Director
Robin des Bois

Daniela Freyer, Co-Founder
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Antoinette van de Water, Director
Bring The Elephant Home

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For the Love of Wildlife Ltd

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Wildlife Friends Foundation

Soraida Salwala, Founder
Friends of the Asian Elephant

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Emily McWilliam, Co-Founder
Burm & Emily's Elephant Sanctuary

Tony Verhulst & Sofie Goetghebeur, Co-Founders
Elephant Haven

Kerri McCrea, Co-Founder
Kindred Spirit Elephant Sanctuary

Gemma Annan, Co-Founder
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International Scientists and Conservationists

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Conservation Biologist and Environmental Consultant
Collaborating Researcher, Amboseli Trust for Elephants

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References


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