

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 47

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the contributions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 20, 2011

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (for himself, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. RUSH, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. FARR, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. MORAN, Mr. WU, Mr. STARK, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Mr. THOMPSON of California) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the contributions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Whereas the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (the Convention) was concluded on March 3, 1973, with the United States as an original signatory nation, and entered into force on July 1, 1975;

Whereas 175 nations are now party to the Convention;

Whereas the Convention aims to ensure that international trade in wild plants and animals does not threaten their survival;

Whereas the Convention both recognizes and provides the basis for international cooperation in the control of international trade to ensure species' survival;

Whereas the international wildlife trade is estimated to be worth billions of dollars per year and to involve hundreds of millions of plants and animals and derived products such as food products, leather and fur, ornamentals, medicinal, and timber;

Whereas high levels of exploitation of and trade in wild animals and plants, together with other factors such as habitat loss, are capable of bringing some species close to extinction;

Whereas parties to the Convention have an international obligation and responsibility to protect endangered animals and plants worldwide;

Whereas it is widely accepted that adherence to protective measures adopted by the parties to the Convention has benefitted the conservation of animals and plants;

Whereas nearly 5,000 species of animals and 28,000 species of plants are protected by the Convention against over-exploitation through international trade;

Whereas the species covered by the Convention are listed in 3 appendices, according to the degree of protection they need;

Whereas species listed on appendix I of the Convention are threatened with extinction and are or may be affected by international trade;

Whereas international commercial trade in species and products made with species listed on appendix I is permitted only in exceptional circumstances;

Whereas appendix II includes species that are not necessarily threatened with extinction but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled;

Whereas appendix III is a list of species included at the request of a party that already regulates trade in the species and that needs the cooperation of other countries to prevent unsustainable or illegal exploitation;

Whereas the parties of the Convention meet every 2 to 3 years at the Conference of the Parties to review the status of species in danger of extinction and to establish trade restrictions with respect to endangered species;

Whereas 15 meetings of the Conference of the Parties have been held since 1976;

Whereas the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties was held in March 2010;

Whereas between 1979 and 1989, more than 600,000 African elephants were killed for their ivory, cutting the continent's population in half;

Whereas poaching still continues with an estimated 38,000 elephants killed annually and 23.2 tons of poached ivory seized since 2007;

Whereas proposals to downlist elephant populations in Tanzania and Zambia from appendix I to appendix II were rejected at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

Whereas as sea ice declines, polar bears will not be able to adapt to a terrestrial-based life resulting in increased

mortality, reduced reproduction, increased human-bear conflicts, and overall drastic decline of populations;

Whereas a proposal to move the polar bear from appendix II to appendix I was rejected at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

Whereas the spiny dogfishes, scalloped hammerhead, great hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, sandbar, dusky, porbeagle, and whitetip sharks have been severely depleted with declines as high as 99 percent in some areas as a result of the high demand for their fins or meat;

Whereas four proposals to include these eight sharks on appendix II were rejected at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

Whereas overfishing, both legal and illegal, increased consumer demand, and inadequate enforcement of infractions have led to historically low populations of northern and Atlantic bluefin tuna; and

Whereas a proposal to include the bluefin tuna in appendix I was rejected at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the important contributions that
3 the Convention on International Trade in Endan-
4 gered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora has made in
5 regulating international trade in endangered species
6 and protecting endangered species worldwide;

7 (2) recognizes the increasing importance of the
8 Convention in addressing multiple and compounding
9 threats on species and ecosystems arising from over-

1 exploitation, habitat loss, invasive species, disease,
2 and the effects of climate change;

3 (3) applauds the Convention's recent leadership
4 in reaffirming strong protections for the African ele-
5 phant, and other endangered species;

6 (4) urges renewed, expanded, and accelerated
7 commitments to the Convention by all Parties to en-
8 sure and enhance the Convention's contribution to
9 species conservation through appropriate controls of
10 international wildlife trade;

11 (5) urges the United States delegation to the
12 Convention to utilize international cooperation to en-
13 courage other Parties to the Convention to collabo-
14 rate effectively to curb excessive exploitation of spe-
15 cies for international trade; and

16 (6) urges the Convention to adopt stronger pro-
17 tections for the polar bear, sharks, bluefin tuna, and
18 other endangered species at the 16th meeting of the
19 Conference of the Parties in 2013.

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