



## CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER AMERICAN AFFAIRS

**Chairperson**

Phong La,  
*Alameda*

January 30, 2015

**Vice Chair**

Dianne  
Yamashiro-Omi,  
*Alameda*

Assemblymember Marc Levine  
Chair, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 160  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Secretary**

Rajan Gill,  
*Yuba City*

Dear Chairman Levine,

The California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs unanimously endorses AB 96 (Atkins/Lara), which will close a loophole in existing state law that condones the illegal sale of ivory in California.

**Treasurer**

Jeffrey S. Kim,  
*Los Angeles*

Due to an exception for "antiques" that current state law permits, ivory traffickers are bombarding our state with ivory from newly-killed elephants and rhinoceros. A Natural Resources Defense Council report found that up to 90% of the ivory for sale in Los Angeles and some 80% in San Francisco were likely illegal under California law. Sadly, the result of the worldwide ivory trade, of which California remains a part, is that more than 35,000 elephants and more than 1,000 rhinoceros are killed each year for their ivory tusks and horns. Poaching to satisfy growing demand for ivory for decorations, jewelry and "medicinal use" has led to an increased likelihood that these species will face extinction in our lifetime. AB 96, which is co-authored by Asian & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus members Senator Richard Pan and Assemblymembers Rob Bonta, and Das Williams, will help turn the tide.

**Commissioners**

Judy Ki,  
*San Diego*

EunSook Lee,  
*Torrance*

Steven Ma,  
*Cupertino*

Catherine 'Ofa  
Mann,  
*Sacramento*

The Commission believes that support for AB 96 accurately reflects a large portion of the AAPI community's perspective on protecting the environment and wildlife threatened with extinction. Studies by the California League of Conservation Voters Foundation and the National Asian American Survey found that over 70% of Asian and Pacific Islander American voters are extremely or very concerned about environmental issues.

Karthick  
Ramakrishnan,  
*Riverside*

Tamiko Wong,  
*San Bruno*

The Commission's support is part of a growing global Asian and Pacific Islander movement to raise awareness about the impact of the ivory trade on elephant and rhinoceros populations in Africa and to end illegal ivory trafficking. More in Asia are calling for action, including NBA star Yao Ming and actress Li Bingbing. Governments and commercial entities around the globe are moving towards change on this issue. We hope that California will show its leadership by adding its important voice to this effort.

Chiem-Seng  
Yaangh,  
*Sacramento*

Cirian  
Villavicencio,  
*Elk Grove*

On behalf of the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs, I urge you and your colleagues to pass AB 96.

MaiKa Yang,  
*Fresno*

Very truly yours

Phong H. La  
Chairperson