

HB2296, HD1



Testimony of Tracy Coppola
On Behalf of Born Free USA
Before the Hawaii Senate Judiciary Committee
In Support of House Bill 2296, HD1

March 20, 2012

On behalf of Born Free USA, a nationally-recognized leader in wildlife protection and conservation, as well as our Hawaii members and international supporters like the Animals Asia Foundation, I thank Chairman Clayton Hee and the Senate Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2296 HD1, an important bill that will prohibit in-state trade of bear gallbladders and bile and combat what continues to be one of the most dangerous threats to bears on the mainland and globally.

We continue to thank Chairman Hee for his leadership on this critically important issue, and we are grateful the bill passed unanimously in the House with co-sponsorship of House Judiciary Chair Keith-Agaran.

As a national 501(c)(3) animal protection and wildlife conservation organization, Born Free USA is dedicated to ending the suffering of exotic animals in captivity, rescuing individual animals in need, protecting wildlife in their natural habitats, and encouraging compassionate conservation. Exposing the trade for what it truly is—a brutal death sentence for bears around the world and a means by which criminals can freely profit from their illegal activity—is a core campaign for the organization.

Bear gallbladders, and their bile byproduct, are used in Asia and in the United States to create medicines and even luxury cosmetic items and toiletries such as shampoos and hemorrhoid creams. The modern pharmaceutical industry and the availability of over 50 synthetic alternatives has eliminated the need to use bear gallbladder or bile to the point where many accredited Traditional Chinese Medical Colleges, like the campus in Hilo, refuse to include gallbladder or bile in their practice. However, a worldwide demand for bear gallbladder and bile and the presence of a profit-making industry remains.

Hawaii is one of the few states that still allow the trade of gallbladders taken from bears on the mainland. Although Hawaii does not have a wild bear population, its nexus to international waters and lack of restriction on trade in bear gallbladders and bile creates a convenient loophole for poachers and profiteers, compromising bans already in place on the mainland.

We urge Hawaii to join the majority of states in fully banning this trade.

HB 2296, HD1 would make it illegal to purchase, sell, transport or deliver bear gallbladders or bile, or any product, item or substance containing, labeled or

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A 501(c)(3) organization

advertised as containing, bear gallbladder or bile. There is no downside to passing this narrowly crafted conservation bill. Doing so will help law enforcement across the nation and sends a message to bear poachers and commercial profiteers across the world that they cannot come to Hawaii markets to profit from their activities. Passing the bill will also help create more consumer awareness that buying products containing bear gall or bile derivatives poses a major threat to bear conservation.

Trade in Bear Gallbladder and Bile is a Problem throughout the United States.

Throughout the nation, carcasses of American black bear cubs and adults are discovered, illegally killed for their gallbladders and bile. Because the Asiatic bear is endangered, poachers often turn to the United States to supply market demand.

Undercover surveys on sale of bear bile products found that a number of U.S. shops carrying traditional Asian medicine openly sell bear bile, including intact gallbladders taken from wild bears. Evidence from undercover operations conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service link several states to a network of illegal bear gallbladder trafficking.

The bear gallbladder and bile trade presents a challenge for law enforcement. Officers continue to reflect that “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence” and that bans are in order. Lack of regulation prohibiting the trade in Hawaii makes the challenge even more difficult. For example, once a gallbladder is removed, it is difficult to prove where the bear was killed. If taken in an area that prohibits the trade, poachers in other areas can avoid prosecution by discreetly selling gallbladders or bile derivatives in states that lack explicit bans, like Hawaii.

Furthermore, because Hawaii lacks any in-state regulation on this issue, law enforcement is not able to periodically conduct store-to-store examinations to determine the scope and frequency of the trade.

Trade in Bear Gallbladder and Bile is a Problem throughout the World.

While American black bears are poached in the wild to supply the gallbladder trade, in China and Southeast Asia, Asiatic black bears are incarcerated in tiny cages and a steel catheter is inserted into their abdomens in order to “milk” them for their bile. If they survive, sometimes the bears can spend more than 30 years in these horrific conditions. When they stop producing viable quantities of bile, they are usually killed. The Asiatic black bear is now severely endangered precisely because of the trade.

The bile industry is secretive but abundant. China is estimated to have 96 farms – mostly in the north-east – containing between 10,000 and 20,000 bears. Chinese bear farms are aggressively marketing their bear bile products to such an extent that, to the horror of conservationists worldwide, just recently, the BEIJING MORNING POST reported that Guizhentang, China's largest bear gall medicine company, submitted an Initial Public Offering application to the Department of the China Security Regulatory Commission. It is feared that this will bring bear bile

products to the attention of even more users around the world and create an upward spiral in demand not only for farmed bile but also for bear gall procured in the wild.

Trade in Bear Gallbladder and Bile is Harmful to Human Health.

Research from our colleagues at the Animals Asia Foundation, a global organization that rescues bears from bile farms in China and Vietnam, demonstrates that bear bile extracted from farmed bears should be considered unsafe for human use.

Findings from a study conducted by the General Hospital of Chengdu Military Command on farmed bear specimens provided by Animals Asia's China Moon Bear Rescue Centre recently suggested that bile extracted from live bears may contain hepatic carcinoma and inflammatory cells and consequent cytokine, which is harmful to human health. It has also been suggested that because farmed bears are often given large amounts of antibiotics to control inflammation, residual amounts may remain in bear bile products used by humans.

Conclusion

In our press release dated January 20, 2012, Senator Hee, sponsor of the identical Senate bill, said it best:

Bear gallbladders and bile poached for profit and sold in the global black wildlife trade have no place in Hawaii. The contemptible practices employed to extract bear gallbladders and bile for profit cannot be justified in the name of custom and tradition. Hawaii has no tolerance for poachers and profiteers trafficking on the global black market wildlife trade.

Please pass HB 2296, HD1 today. Doing so will help protect wild bear populations globally and will assist law enforcement in its efforts to prosecute illegal trade.

We need to close this dangerous loophole.

Best Regards,



Tracy Coppola, J.D., M.S.
Program Associate, Born Free USA



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

TO: Honorable Chair Hee, Vice-Chair Shimabukuro and Committee Members

Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee, 3-20-12, 1015am, Room 016

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2296 HD1; Animal Cruelty; Bear Products

Submitted by: Inga Gibson, Hawaii State Director, The Humane Society of the United States, P.O. Box 89131, Honolulu, HI 96830, igibson@hsus.org, 808-922-9910

On behalf of our 50,000 members and supporters of the Humane Society of the United States in Hawaii, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak in **support of HB2296** to prohibit the trade in bear gallbladders and bile. If this legislation were to pass, Hawaii would join 34 other states that already prohibit the trade in bear parts.

For more than a decade our organization has investigated the national and international trade in bear parts, specifically the gallbladders and bile. The demand for bear viscera across America and in other countries drives bear poaching and the trade in bear parts, and ultimately puts endangered bear species at great risk.

Bear parts and derivatives are extremely valuable because they are used in luxury cosmetic items. The price of bear products depends on where they are sold—a single whole bear gallbladder can sell for \$10,000 in South Korea, and bear parts have even been found for sale in our own downtown Honolulu for thousands of dollars.

Despite the availability of excellent synthetic alternatives, there is still demand for bear bile in the U.S. and across the country. As a result, wild American bears and highly endangered Asian bears are slaughtered for their gallbladders and bile, which are consumed domestically or exported illegally. Meanwhile, Asiatic black bears are entombed in coffin-like cages in China and elsewhere in Asia, where they are cruelly milked for their bile with a steel catheter. When the bears outlive their productive bile-producing years, they are slaughtered, their paws are lopped off for high-priced soups, and their gallbladders ripped out for sale.

The world sadly watched for decades as the trade in elephant ivory, rhino horn, and tiger bone contributed to the precipitous decline of these species throughout their range. Now, bears are also targeted, and the threat is tangible, especially given the size of the national and global markets for bear parts.

In 2010, Hawaii spurred a now-global initiative to prohibit the sale and possession of shark fin and fin products. We should extend these same protections to bears who are the victim of this cruel treatment that threatens their populations and the unnecessary “luxury” products that are derived from their suffering.

We respectfully urge your support for HB2296.



“Working within CITES for the protection and conservation of species in international trade”

March 16, 2012

The undersigned members of the Species Survival Network, an international coalition working for the strict implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) fully support House Bill 2296 HD1 to prohibit the commercial trade in bear gallbladders and bile in the state of Hawaii.

The absence of consistent laws prohibiting the trade in bear parts facilitates a flourishing intrastate, interstate and international commerce in bear gallbladders and bile.

The Hawaii Legislature should act without delay to pass HB 2296 HD1.

Animals Asia Foundation
Animal Alliance of Canada
Animal Concerns Research and Education Society
Animal Welfare Institute
Born Free USA
Born Free Foundation
Campaigns against the Cruelty to Animals
Cetacean Society International
Humane Society Australia
Humane Society International
The Humane Society of Canada
ProWildlife
Wildlife Protection Society of India
Wildlife Trust of India
The World Society for the Protection of Animals
Zoocheck Canada

TESTIMONY BY RAY ZHU
FORMER CHINA PUBLIC RELATION & EDUCATION MANAGER
ANIMALS ASIA FOUNDATION
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 2296
MARCH 20, 2012

Chair Hee and Members of the Committee,

My name is (Ray) Ke Zhu, a Chinese citizen currently working on my Masters of Business Administration degree at Chaminade University of Honolulu. I was formerly the China Public Relation & Education Manager for the Animals Asia Foundation from 2004 to 2010. **I strongly support House Bill No. 2296** and its intent to ban the sale and promotion of bear bile products in the State of Hawaii.

Earlier last month, an investigation revealed 4 intact gallbladders for sale at a lucrative price in Honolulu's Chinatown.

Through my work with Animals Asia, I gained an in-depth understanding on bear bile farming. I have personally witnessed the cruelty that the bears are subjected to first hand. And it was my job to educate people through outreach programs and media campaigns.

Bear bile farming is a cruel and unnecessary industry that involves bears being milked for their bile through crude holes that are cut into their abdomen wall and into the gall bladder. These wounds are deliberately left open, leaving the bears subject to bacterial infection and disease and in great pain.

The bears that Animals Asia has rescued from bile farms are suffering from a range of ailments including liver cancer. The bile from such sick bears is contaminated with bacteria, pus, feces, urine, cancer cells and possible residue of antibiotics.

Bear bile has been used in Chinese Traditional Medicine for many centuries but, bear bile products can be easily and cheaply be replaced by over 50 herbal alternatives and synthetics according to traditional Chinese medicine doctors in China.

Bear bile farming is cruel and unnecessary and there is no place for this industry anywhere in the world. Hawaii should follow the nationwide trend and ban the sale and promotion of bear bile products.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: stacykt@hawaii.edu
Subject: Testimony for HB2296 on 3/20/2012 10:15:00 AM
Date: Monday, March 19, 2012 10:14:58 AM

Testimony for JDL 3/20/2012 10:15:00 AM HB2296

Conference room: 016
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Stacy Takekawa
Organization: Individual
E-mail: stacykt@hawaii.edu
Submitted on: 3/19/2012

Comments: