IVORY BILL – IMPORT OF NARWHAL TUSKS INTO THE EU

Thank you for your contribution to the debate on clause 35 of the Ivory Bill during the Committee stage. I said that I would write to you about the import of narwhal tusks into the EU.

The narwhal is covered in Appendix II to the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species as a cetacean. Inclusion of the narwhal in Appendix II means that it is not currently considered threatened with extinction, but trade is controlled in order to avoid exploitation which is incompatible with its survival. Trade in all cetaceans listed in Appendix II to the Convention is prohibited in EU law subject to certain exceptions. One of these exceptions is that cetacean species, including their products and derivatives other than meat products for commercial purposes, may be imported into the EU where they have been taken by the people of Greenland under licence. This means that as long as the correct licence has been granted in Greenland, an application to import narwhal tusks into the EU may be successful and its ivory can therefore be freely traded within the EU.

As you are aware, the Ivory Bill does not prohibit dealings in narwhal tusks. However, because narwhal are an ivory-bearing species, the Secretary of State would be able to prohibit all UK dealings in narwhal ivory through secondary legislation under clause 35.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of both Houses.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

David Rutley MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment

29th June 2018

Thank you for all your hard work on the Bill Committee.