

March 21, 2024

Chairman Robert E. Craven, Sr.

cc: Representatives McEntee, Knight, Ajello, Batista, Bennett, Caldwell, Casimiro, Corvese, Cruz, Dawson, Felix, Noret, Place, Roberts  
House Committee on Judiciary

RE: H 7454 Related to Commercial Law – General Regulatory Provisions – Trade in Animal Fur Products Act

Dear Chairman Craven and members of the Committee,

I am unable to attend today's scheduled hearing so I am writing to express my concerns regarding proposed provisions contained in Bill H 7454 which I would otherwise do in person.

Specifically, under 6 – 60 – 4 Exemptions (3), there is no provision that would allow the owner of legally harvested wild fur to sell their fur via shipping it directly to a wholesale fur buyer outside of the state. In fact, the bill as currently written would prohibit such activity.

At one time, much, if not most of the legally harvested fur in Rhode Island and other states was typically sold at local fur auctions, often hosted by local trapping organizations, to regional fur buyers who traveled around the region. The fur buyers, acting as middle men, in turn would sell fur to fur auction houses and processors within the United States and Canada. Today, there are few regional fur buyers and much of the fur harvested in Rhode Island and the region is sold directly to auction houses and processors outside the state by the person who legally harvested the fur. Fur is typically shipped via the U.S. Mail.

The R.I. Department of Environmental Management strictly regulates the harvest of wild animals for fur, with mandatory harvest reporting requirements for all licensed trappers.

I believe this an oversight not taken into account by the drafters of this bill and not a deliberate attempt to restrict licensed trappers, who have legally obtained wild fur in accordance with laws and regulations promulgated by the Department of Environmental Management, from selling their fur in a manner consistent with current practices.

I respectfully request that you take this issue into consideration when deliberating this bill and either reject the bill as currently written or amend it to allow the sale of fur in a manner other than strictly a face to face interaction.

Sincerely,

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