



Rhode Island Farm Bureau 16B Nooseneck Hill Rd West Greenwich, RI 02817
www.rifb.org Phone: 401-385-3339 Fax 401-385-3394

Attn: Representative Craven, Chair, House Judiciary Committee, and Committee Members

Testimony in Opposition to H 7454

An Act Relating to Commercial Law- General Regulatory Provisions- Trade in Animal Fur Products Act
Before the House Judiciary Committee

March 21, 2024

Rhode Island Farm Bureau Federation is an independent, non-governmental grassroots organization made up of farmers and others with agricultural interests. Today our over 1200 RIFB members are not only large farmers and small farmers, but also include those engaged in agricultural industries, teachers of agriculture, and consumers.

Ri Farm Bureau opposes **H 7454: An Act Relating to Commercial Law- General Regulatory Provisions - Trade in Animal Fur Products Act**, prohibiting the sale, offer for sale, trade, or distribution of fur products in the state of Rhode Island.

There are numerous agricultural endeavors for which fur and hides are a byproduct of the raising of food animals. These byproducts are an important part of the economics of farming and banning the sale of them would affect not only Rhode Island farms, but farms and farm families across the country.

While this year's bill in its current state *does* exempt "Cowhide, deerskin, alpaca skin, goatskin or sheepskin with the hair or fleece attached thereto from the definition of "fur products", we have concerns that this could be extended to ban these exempted items. In 2021, a similar legislative bill, H 5188, removed the phrasing **"Cowhide with the hair attached thereto"** from **11-70-2 Definitions 2 (ii) "Fur product" shall not mean any of the following**, reinforcing Farm Bureau's previous concerns that this legislation could be extended to ban any currently exempted items.

Rabbit skins with fur, cattle hides with hair, and sheep and goat skins with hair and fleece attached are all byproducts of RI farms, and a deer farm is being considered in the state. These farms would lose valuable income if unable to sell their hides with the fur or hair attached. The 2021 removal of "cowhide with the hair attached" since 2020's legislation was proposed reminds us how simple it would be to have any of these locally raised hides removed as well if this bill were to pass.

RI Farm Bureau opposes **H 7454** and asks that the committee not support the **Trade in Animal Fur Products Act**.

Henry B. Wright III
President, RI Farm Bureau