

Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

March 12, 2024

Re: Testimony in Opposition to Bill HB 7454

I am Rebecca Darling of Darling Leather And Fur speaking on behalf of my business and all retail fur shops and manufacturers in America.

I oppose HB 7454 because a ban on fur sales would negatively impact the local Rhode Island environment and small businesses around the country. My business does online sales nationwide, so these bills would directly negatively impact me as well.

Wild fur is an environmentally friendly resource. It is sustainable, renewable, biodegradable and humane. Responsible harvest of wild fur bearing species by hunters and trappers keeps populations in balance. Many fur bearing species, such as raccoons and coyotes, become pests when overpopulation occurs, leading to increases in nuisance animal complaints, passing the cost of removal onto citizens of municipalities. Overpopulation can also lead to rampant disease (which can be spread to domestic animals - such as rabies in many species, canine distemper in raccoons, and mange in coyotes, to name a few). Without a market for fur sales, hunters and trappers will harvest less fur bearers leading to these negative outcomes, and needless suffering of fur bearing species. Fur harvesting is done in a sustainable and humane manner. Each state places limits to prevent overharvesting. All states are bound by federal CITES law to follow best management practices for the humane and ethical harvest of fur. Unlike synthetic materials made using petroleum products, fur is a renewable resource, it is biodegradable, and warmer than synthetic alternatives. Wild fur is an environmentally friendly resource.

A ban on fur sales would negatively impact small businesses in Rhode Island and around the country. Unlike fast fashion, the fur business, is small business. Individual fur harvesters sell their harvest to independent fur buyers - fur buyers sell to the international fur market, or to craftspeople like myself. Small tanneries around the country tan the hides into usable pelts, so they can be sewn into garments. As a business owner who makes and sells fur items online, a ban on fur sales in Massachusetts would harm my business, and countless other individuals and small businesses around the country.

Prohibiting the sale of fur products is anti-environment, and anti-small business. Prohibiting the sale of fur is well meaning, but will lead to increased animal suffering due to overpopulation.

Thank you,

Rebecca Darling

I urge you to vote against HB 7454 and continue to allow legal fur fashions and products to be sold in the state of Rhode Island.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak against HB 7454 . I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Darling

rebeccadarling44@gmail.com

1803 Krispin St.

Harsens Island, MI 48028

Tel #810 824 0534