

# SUPPORT H. 7454/ S. 2302: End the sale of new fur products in Rhode Island

Legislation to end the sale of new fur products in Rhode Island is desperately needed to support animal welfare, environmental protection, and the values of the public majority.

**H. 7454/ S. 2302 is commonsense policy for people and animals.** This legislation will end the sale of new fur products throughout the state, including fashion apparel, accessories, and home decor.

In a [recent survey](#) of Rhode Island voters, upwards of 70% said they support legislation to prohibit the sale of new fur products, including both Republicans and Democrats alike.

H. 7454/S. 2302 includes numerous exemptions that ensure the bill focuses on ending the cruelest practices within the fur industry.



"Monster Foxes" are overbred for fur making them unrecognizable. *Oikeutta Elaimille*

## **The bill does NOT prohibit the sale of the following items:**

- Used fur products. Under [federal law](#), used fur products must be labeled as such.
- Fur pelts that have not been manufactured into products. These items are not "fur products" as defined by the federal Fur Products Labeling Act.
- Products made of animal hair that has been removed from skin (e.g., fishing lures, felt hats), and animal skin that had the hair removed (i.e. leather goods). These items are not "fur" as defined by the federal Fur Products Labeling Act.
- Cowhide, deerskin, goatskin, alpaca skin, or sheepskin with the hair or fleece still attached, which are considered by-products of the meat industry.
- Taxidermy.
- Products used in the practice of religion, such as shtreimels used within the Jewish community.
- Products made from hunted or trapped animals that are sold in face-to-face transactions, such as farmers markets and craft fairs or even the person's residence. This exemption tracks with a labeling exemption outlined in the federal Fur Products Labeling Act.

**Ending fur sales will create a more humane marketplace for Rhode Island's consumers while having minimal impact to businesses.** According to federal census data, 18 retailers sold any fur in Rhode Island during 2017. Yet, most fur products sold at these stores comes in the form of smaller accessories like poms on hats and handbags, or trim on jackets and gloves. During that year, fur product sales accounted for less than 1% of these retailers' sales. As of January 2024, we are aware of only four stores in Rhode Island that sell new fur.

In areas where similar bans on new fur products have passed, such as California, fur retailers remain in business. They continue to provide fur-related services such as storage and cleaning, sell used and vintage fur products, and transition to faux fur options. Major fashion brands are now using faux fur

made from biodegradable or recycled materials that are more humane and sustainable than animal pelts. Ending the sale of new fur products will help drive demand for sustainable innovation in the fashion industry.

**Severe animal cruelty involved in making fur products.** Every year, more than 100 million wild animals are confined in fur factory farms just to be crudely killed and turned into needless fur products. The overwhelming majority of these farms are located overseas, primarily in China, where these animals spend their entire lives in cages, deprived of their natural behaviors, only to be gassed or electrocuted at the end. They suffer serious welfare problems, such as self-mutilation, infected wounds, and illness.

In the U.S. and internationally, the fur farming industry is largely unregulated and typically not subject to animal welfare or humane slaughter laws. Instead, fur farmers rely on voluntary management practices established by the industry itself which focus primarily on efficiency of production, not animal or environmental health.

**Fur factory farms are a biosecurity threat to the public and wildlife.** Mink on hundreds of fur factory farms across Europe and North America, including in the U.S., have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. Research shows that farmed mink can spread the mutated virus to humans, especially in fur factory farm conditions. Now, the highly pathogenetic strain of avian flu (H5N1) has been detected in mink, leading to serious concerns for potential transmission to humans. Diseases from fur farms also threatens wildlife, with escaped animals infecting wild populations near fur farms.

**Fur production is harmful for humans and the environment.** The fur industry has the **largest negative environmental impact** of any material used for fashion, in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, waste runoff, and toxicity. The processing and dyeing of fur requires the use of toxic, carcinogenic chemicals, like chromium and formaldehyde, to prevent the skin from decaying. This hazardous process has led to fur dressing being ranked as **one of the world's five worst industries** for toxic-metal pollution by the World Bank. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has previously fined six fur processing plants for causing high levels of pollution and for using solvents that may cause respiratory problems and other health issues.



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