

February 17, 2025

Representative Robert E. Craven, Sr., Chair
House Judiciary Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: SUPPORT – H. 5447, The Trade In Farmed Animal Fur Products Act.

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of the Trade in Farmed Animal Fur Products Act introduced by Representatives Serpa, Edwards, O'Brien, Baginski, Solomon, Kazarian, Lima. There are many reasons to support a ban on farmed fur, including the environmental degradation inherent in fur farming and industrial fur production, the zoonotic threats posed by the unsanitary warehousing of large numbers of animals and, most importantly, the absence of any federal regulation of or accountability for the terrible abuses inflicted upon the foxes, mink, rabbits and other unfortunate species farmed for their fur.

Approximately 85% of the 100 million animals killed each year for their fur are raised on fur farms, where they are crowded in barren enclosures with minimal protection from the elements. They exhibit stress-induced pathologies like self-mutilation, infanticide, and cannibalism, and suffer untreated wounds and infections, as well as the frustration of every natural instinct, only to meet an unmerciful death by bludgeoning, gassing, drowning, suffocation, poison, electrocution, or whatever happens to be the most cost-effective method at hand. It is fairly common for stunned or immobilized animals to be skinned alive for their furs. Regardless of the ethics of killing animals for fashion, most people would not condone the cruelties inherent in fur farming.

The fur industry claims that fur is more sustainable than alternative fabrics, but the notion that one can skin an animal for its fur, dispose of everything but the fur and call it sustainable is absurd,

especially when there are so many plant-based, recycled and synthetic alternatives. In fact, fur farms and the manufacturing of fur products have the largest negative environmental impact of any material used for fashion. Fur is immensely energy- and resource-intensive, with poor feed-to-fur conversion rates. A recent report by Humane Society International <https://www.hsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/HSI_UK-Furs-Dirty-Footprint_Jun23.pdf> revealed that the carbon footprint of mink fur is 31 times higher than cotton, 26 times higher than acrylic, and 25 times higher than polyester. It's air emissions are 271 times higher than acrylic, 215 times higher than cotton and 150 times higher than polyester. The average water consumption of mink, raccoon dog, and fox fur is 104 times higher than acrylic, 91 times higher than polyester and 5 times higher than cotton. Mink produces nearly 400 times more water pollution per kilogram than polyester, and on average mink, raccoon dog and fox fur are 100 times more water-polluting than cotton and 75 times more than acrylic.

The Trade in Animal Fur Products Act reflects the public's increasing disapproval of fur harvested for fashion. Major designers and retailers are forgoing fur sales in favor of an ever-expanding selection of attractive alternative fabrics. Rhode Island is a leader in passing legislation for the humane treatment of animals, and I hope we will soon join the list of states and municipalities committed to a more compassionate and sustainable standard of living.

Sincerely,

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