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From: Lisa Levinson <lisa@idausa.org>
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Chair of the committee Representative Robert E. Craven, Sr.,

Please accept my written testimony on behalf of In Defense of Animals and our Rhode Island supporters to express strong support for H. 5447, which would end the sale of new fur-farmed products in the state. We commend Rhode Island for taking this significant step toward ending the cruelty associated with the fur trade.

This legislation will prohibit the sale of new fur from animals such as mink, foxes, and raccoon dogs, who are often confined to fur farms under inhumane conditions. These animals endure severe physical and psychological harm, including self-mutilation and disease, before being killed by methods like gassing or electrocution. By passing this bill, Rhode Island will help end its support for this cruelty and prevent further exploitation of animals for fashion.

Importantly, H. 5447 includes exemptions for used fur products, fishing lures, and other animal hair products such as shearling, wool, and mohair, and does not impact leather or raw pelts. For this reason, the bill only targets the new fur trade.

The economic impact on Rhode Island businesses will be minimal. Fur sales in the state account for less than 1% of overall sales, and businesses that sell fur products can continue offering services like cleaning, storage, and the sale of used or faux fur. Many fashion brands have already transitioned away from fur, reflecting changing consumer demand.

This bill also addresses crucial public health and environmental concerns. Fur farms have been linked to the spread of diseases such as COVID-19 and avian influenza, and they contribute significantly to environmental degradation through toxic chemicals and waste runoff. Fur products also contain carcinogenic substances, further harming both consumers and the planet.

By supporting H. 5447, Rhode Island can create a more humane marketplace, protect public health, and contribute to environmental sustainability. We urge you to act on this important legislation and make Rhode Island a leader in ethical policymaking.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With Gratitude,
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