



**Testimony in Support of H.5447**  
**Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee**  
**March 2025**

World Animal Protection, an international animal advocacy organization with Rhode Island members, strongly supports prohibiting the sale of new fur products produced in fur factory farms.

**Wild Animal Welfare**

The fur industry is part of the global wildlife farming industry, in which at least [5.5 billion wild animals](#) are farmed for profit. Wild animals can only thrive in the wild. Wild animals can't adapt to live in high densities and cramped spaces typical of farms. Welfare issues [documented](#) on wildlife farms include disease, malnourishment, stress-induced behaviors, injuries, infected wounds, cannibalism, physical abnormalities, and premature death.

The fur industry is no different from other wildlife farming operations. Almost all fur products come from animals who are kept in large, factory-like fur farms. Animals are confined to tiny wire cages and unable to fulfill their most basic natural behaviors. Many animals [engage in self-mutilation](#), such as biting their feet and tails, frantic pacing and circling, cannibalization, and infanticide.

Most animals farmed for fur are minks and foxes, both wild animals. The fur industry claims that mink and fox farmers follow strict guidelines concerning the humane treatment of animals. They will cite industry-created certification schemes and professional bodies. On their face, "guidelines" that allow wild animals to be kept in a small cage for their entire lives cannot be humane or promote welfare.

Minks and foxes are both carnivores, and scientists have [concluded](#) these species cannot be farmed humanely. In the wild, minks are semi-aquatic and solitary. They dive up to six meters and swim across 35 meters. On fur farms, they're [crammed into cages](#) with other minks unable to swim or explore. Their territory can extend up to 7.5 km in the wild, while a cage in a fur farm is only 1 square meter.

**Fur Alternatives**

Rejecting animal fur doesn't mean the end of fur in fashion. Though animal-derived fur has lost industry and public support, the fur aesthetic remains popular. But using animals to produce fur



clothing and décor is highly inefficient. Ignoring the devastating animal welfare, environmental, and climate impacts of animal fur production, it's also time-consuming and expensive to breed, feed, and slaughter millions of animals to produce a small number of garments. Much of the killed animal's fur isn't even used because furriers want consistent colors and textures. For example, the fur on a fox's head will usually be thrown out because the fibers are smaller and have a different texture from the rest of the fox's body.

**A new market is emerging for next-generation fur.** We now have alternative materials that achieve the softness and warmth of animal fur without the cruelty and health risks involved with fur farming. Instead of the polyester of the past, these new materials are recycled, plant-based, or lab-grown. For example, [BioFluff](#) takes fibers from flowers, stems, and leaves to create plant-based fur. Handbags using BioFluff debuted at Copenhagen Fashion Week this past February. Ecopel, a global faux fur textile company that has partnered with more than 300 brands, including Stella McCartney, recently unveiled an animal-free textile with a new material called Flur, which is 100% plant-based and biodegradable.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Cabrera Holtz".

Liz Cabrera Holtz, Esq.  
Senior Campaigns Manager  
World Animal Protection