



Formerly called the Humane  
Society of the United States and  
Humane Society International

**Support for House Bill 5447, Trade in Farmed Animal Fur Products**  
**House Judiciary Committee**  
**PJ Smith**  
**Humane World for Animals**

Good evening Chair Craven and Members of the Committee,

My name is PJ Smith and I am the director off fashion policy for Humane World for Animals, formerly called the Humane Society of the United States. Our organization is in strong support of House Bill 5447 which will prohibit the sale of new fur products, including clothing, fashion accessories and home décor, from animals raised in captivity for their fur. Humane World is supportive of this bill because of the extreme animal cruelty associated with fur products, as well as the high costs to the environment and public health.

While this committee has previously heard this bill, this year's language is quite strong and deserves passage. We have spent the last year talking with stakeholders to find common ground and compromise. As such, the bill is solely focused on prohibiting the sale of new fur products from animals held in fur farms. It will not impact the sale of pelts or fur products from hunted or trapped animals. Additionally, we support an amended version of this bill that fully exempts fishing lures and products used to make fishing lures, to ensure the bill does not impact anglers. The bill does not prohibit the sale of used fur products or products from a wide range of wild species like deer and elk, or common farm animals typically raised for meat like cattle, bison, sheep, and goats. This bill does not impact the sale of loose hair products either, like felt hats or paint brushes.

While the scope of this bill is narrow, its impact is significant. Across the world, tens of millions of wild animals like foxes, mink and raccoon dogs are bred and killed in fur factory farms every year for the sole purpose of turning their pelts into fur products like hats, keychains, and other novelty items. While the overwhelming majority of fur farms are in China, they exist here in the U.S. as well.

Earlier this year, our Animal Rescue Team assisted county and state officials in Ohio with the removal of hundreds of animals on a fur farm after the owner passed away. Our responders reported some of the most horrific conditions they'd ever seen, with animals living in their own filth, suffering from injuries and missing limbs, and even dead animals left to rot in their cages. Through an enormous effort and extensive resources, we saved more than 330 animals from this fur farm and had them placed in sanctuaries and rehab facilities across the country.

This incident is nothing out of the ordinary for animals living on fur farms in the U.S. or overseas. Fur farmed animals are not protected by state or federal animal welfare laws or humane slaughter laws. They are killed by gassing and electrocution to keep costs low and not damage the pelt. Investigations around the world show animals suffering immensely in fur farms, with wild animals locked in cages for nothing more than fashion. It is time for Rhode Island to take a stand and not be complicit in this cruelty.

This bill will create a more humane marketplace for Rhode Island's consumers while having minimal impact to businesses. In areas where similar bans on new fur products have passed, fur retailers remain in business today. They continue to provide fur-related services such as storage and cleaning, sell used and vintage fur products, and transition to faux fur options which are increasingly made of sustainable, bio-based materials.

By passing this bill, Rhode Island would join numerous countries across the world, as well as the entire state of California and multiple cities throughout the U.S., in the effort to end the sale of new fur products. We respectfully ask the members of this Committee to support its passage. Thank you.