

HB-719

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 11:23:22 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cathy Goeggel	Animal Rights Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support



Animal Defenders International

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Animal Defenders International in strong support of HB719.

Contact: Drew McCormick, Public Policy Specialist, drewmccormick@ad-international.org

Animal Defenders International (ADI) offers the following in strong support of House Bill [719](#), Relating to Animal Fur Products, to prohibit the sale of fur in Hawaii.

If this bill passes, Hawaii will join the state of California, a growing list of nations, and numerous fashion leaders in saying no to fur industry cruelty and its associated environmental and health risks.

When people buy fur, they buy cruelty, not luxury or beauty. Fur products come from animal either trapped or killed in the wild, or animals cruelly confined in so-called “fur farms” or “fur factories.”

Animals trapped in the wild experience a long and painful death. For example, although leghold traps were declared inhumane by the American Veterinary Medical Association, they remain a common kill method in the US fur industry.

Animals farmed for their fur are unable to express their normal behaviours and the environmental deprivation they are subjected to causes distress, suffering, and psychological and behavioural damage. For example, animals farmed for their fur are kept in long rows of tiny wire mesh cages with wire mesh floors, so that their feces and urine fall through the bars, which is extremely uncomfortable for the animals.

ADI investigations show nightmarish industry standard practices, where animals’ miserable lives in cramped, filthy cages abruptly end by electrocution (to their mouth, anus, or genitals), suffocation, broken necks, or worse – some are still conscious and breathing even after they’re skinned. ADI observed foxes struggling as they were dragged from their cages by their tails and hung up by a rope on one foot. Electrical prods inserted into their mouths and rectum shocked them as other foxes looked on; some screamed and yelped, at times requiring several shocks to die. In our undercover video, one fox regains consciousness, writhing on a pile of dead animals, and tries to escape before he’s caught and electrified again. I include here for your consideration, links to ADI’s 2017 reports - [Bloody Harvest](#) and [A Lifetime: living and dying on a fur farm](#) - and to [video of one of ADI’s investigations](#) into this terrible industry. It’s time to end this horrific practice.

These upsetting circumstances operate on a large scale in the fur industry. Up to 15-20 foxes suffer and die to make one fur coat; up to 60-80 mink suffer and die for one mink coat. A whole host of animals are killed for their fur including mink, foxes, rabbits, sables, chinchillas, beavers, lynx, seals, raccoons, coyotes, muskrats, wolves, otters, cats, and dogs.¹ In 2010, approximately 50 million animal fur pelts were produced annually worldwide.²

There is also emerging data that confirms that fur farms and commercial fur products have a negative effect on human health. Fur can be toxic. Unaltered by humans, animal fur is organic. But

¹ <http://www.ad-international.org/fur/go.php?id=3764&ssi=40>

² 2010 report

“Chemicals [like] formaldehyde and chromium are used to process furs, and are linked to leukaemia and [other] cancers.”³ “The World Bank ranks fur as one of the **top five** toxic-metal polluters.”⁴

Additionally, Covid-19 and the H5N1 variant of avian flu have exposed this industry as a serious contagion risk. The reactionary culling of millions is a costly tragedy that ignores the real problem. These outbreaks have stirred calls worldwide for necessary transformational change in the way humans trade in, consume, impact, and too often abuse nature.

The fur industry also presents high climate and environmental costs, with significant emissions and land use requirements, as well as air and water pollutants emanating from animal waste, incineration, and tanning processes. Industrial animal farms are “extremely energy intensive requiring disproportionately large inputs of fossil fuels.”

The majority of people agree that, in this day and age, fur factories and fur products are just not worth it.⁵

Bans on fur products or fur farms exist already in more than 25 countries and various US municipalities. Additionally, fur bans, similar to this one in Hawaii, have been proposed in multiple US states and municipalities.

Furthermore, numerous fashion design icons have committed to innovative fur-free fashion. Such companies include, among others, Armani, Banana Republic, Calvin Klein, DKNY, Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci, H&M, Hugo Boss, Ralph Lauren, Stella McCartney, Tommy Hilfiger, and Versace. The fashion world can and is already moving on, and we should too.

On behalf of our supporters in Hawaii, we urge you to support House Bill [719](#), Relating to Animal Fur Products, a necessary and humane action against fur industry cruelty and its associated environmental and health risks.

Many thanks for your time and consideration.

Drew McCormick, Public Policy Specialist
[Animal Defenders International](#)
drewmccormick@ad-international.org
www.ad-international.org

³ <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/sustainable-fashion-blog/is-fur-trade-sustainable>

⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/sustainable-fashion-blog/is-fur-trade-sustainable>

⁵ <https://www.ad-international.org/fur/go.php?id=4445&ssi=19>



Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Feb. 3, 2025

To: Chair Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa
Vice Chair Rep. Matthias Kusch
and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Director of Community Engagement
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in support of HB 719: Relating to Animal Fur Products
Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2025, 9:30 a.m., Room 325 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for House Bill 719, which prohibits the sale, offer, possession with intent to sell, display, distribution, or trade of fur products in the State, with certain exceptions; establishes civil penalties for violations; and takes effect 6/30/2025.

The Hawaiian Humane Society works to protect animals from cruelty, neglect and suffering. The fur industry confines animals in inhumane conditions only to slaughter them for use by the fashion industry.

Most of the animals harvested for their pelts are undomesticated. Hawaiian Humane believes that wild animals generally should be permitted to exist undisturbed in their natural environments. While this is primarily out of concern for animal welfare, it is also appropriate from a One Health perspective, which recognizes the relationships between threats to people, domestic animals, wildlife, and their shared environment. Shrinking the consumer market for these goods discourages the existence of fur farms, protecting people and animals from a source of zoonotic disease transmission.

Mahalo for your consideration of our support for this measure.



Animal Welfare.
Worldwide.

February 3, 2025

Re: Testimony in support of SB 687/HB 719, Relating to Animal Fur Products

Dear Chair Kahaloa and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems,

FOUR PAWS USA respectfully urges all committee members to vote yes on SB 687/HB 719, which would end the sale of new fur products in Hawaii.

Consumers today have become more aware of how animals are inhumanely treated and cruelly killed for their fur on fur farms, along with the environmental degradation caused by the fur industry, and they are seeking to buy clothing, shoes, and accessories that are as ethically produced as they are functional and stylish. This momentum is prompting cities, states, and countries around the world to ban the sale and production of fur, and is leading fashion brands, retailers, and designers to end the use of fur in fashion once and for all.

It is well established that animal cruelty is inherent in the fur industry and over 20 million animals are killed annually for their fur. On fur factory farms, wild animals spend their entire lives in cramped cages, deprived of the ability to engage in natural behaviors. These animals are then killed in inhumane ways - such as crude gassing, anal/genital electrocution and neck breaking - to preserve the quality of their pelts.

The fur industry poses serious environmental threats and risks to public safety as well. On fur factory farms, waste runoff from animals pollutes the soil and waterways. The tanning and dyeing process uses toxic and carcinogenic chemicals, like chromium and formaldehyde, to prevent the skin from decaying. Furthermore, it is vitally important to consider the zoonotic risk factors and public health concerns posed by fur farms. Like humans, minks are incredibly sensitive to respiratory illnesses, and mink farms have proved to be a perfect breeding ground for the spread of COVID-19. More recently, avian influenza has spread on fur farms as well.

By passing SB 687/HB 719 and eliminating the sale of new fur products, Hawaii can be a leader in supporting animal welfare, public health, and environmental protection in the U.S.

Sincerely,

Melanie Lary
Research and Campaigns Manager

FOUR PAWS USA
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Fur Commission USA

P.O. Box 513 Preston ID, 83263
(435) 915-6735
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Written Testimony of the Fur Commission USA Opposing HB 719 – Prohibition on the Sale of Fur Products Before the Hawaii State Legislature Hearing Date: February 5, 2025

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is **Challis Hobbs**, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Fur Commission USA, the national trade association representing mink farmers and the U.S. fur industry. We oppose HB 719, which seeks to ban the sale, possession, and trade of fur products in Hawaii.

HB 719 is Based on Misleading Claims About Animal Welfare

U.S. mink farms operate under some of the most stringent animal welfare regulations in agriculture. Over **96% of American mink pelts come from farms certified under a science-based program peer-reviewed by the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO)**—the same organization that oversees animal welfare audits for the nation’s largest livestock industries.

These farms undergo regular **third-party inspections** to ensure compliance with animal care standards, including **nutrition, housing, biosecurity, veterinary care, and humane harvesting methods that follow American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) guidelines**. Farmers work closely with veterinarians and animal scientists to uphold the highest standards in animal husbandry.

HB 719 falsely portrays fur farming as cruel, ignoring the reality that U.S. mink farms meet or exceed established welfare standards, with **housing designed to accommodate natural behaviors**.

Mink Farming is Environmentally Sustainable—Nothing is Wasted

Natural fur is one of the most eco-friendly and biodegradable materials in fashion. Unlike synthetic alternatives made from petroleum-based plastics that contribute to microplastic pollution, **real fur decomposes naturally**. Fur garments are **long-lasting, often passed down for generations, and can endure for decades**—a stark contrast to fast fashion’s disposable nature.

Mink farming operates on a **zero-waste model**, ensuring every part of the animal is used while contributing to a sustainable agricultural system:

- **Reduces Food Waste:** Mink farms **upcycle over a billion pounds of food industry byproducts** annually, repurposing materials that would otherwise end up in landfills as high-quality mink feed.
- **Sustainable Fur:** Unlike synthetic fur, which sheds microplastics into the environment, **natural fur biodegrades without harming ecosystems**.
- **Agricultural Benefits:** Mink manure is **used as organic fertilizer for crops**, and processed byproducts are repurposed for **compost, pet food, crab bait, and leather conditioners**.

This **closed-loop system** supports sustainability, reduces waste, and aligns with responsible environmental practices.

HB 719 Unjustly Targets American Farmers, Hurts Jobs, and Fuels Extremist Attacks

While this bill may seem symbolic, it **unjustly gives a black eye to responsible U.S. mink farmers**—hardworking rural families who follow strict welfare and environmental standards. By banning fur sales, Hawaii’s legislature would be **validating activist misinformation** and fueling the narrative used by extremist groups that seek to **harass, vandalize, and terrorize American farmers**.

Mink farms across the country have been repeatedly **targeted by animal rights extremists**, leading to **property destruction, animal harm, and direct threats against farm families**. We have seen activists **trespass onto private farms, destroy property, cut fences, and release thousands of mink into the wild—where the vast majority die within 24-48 hours from exposure**. These attacks are not just against businesses but against **rural American families who are being threatened and harassed for simply earning an honest living**.

The proposed ban will also **harm businesses** by negatively impacting Hawaii’s retailers that sell **legally produced fur garments, outerwear, and accessories**. These businesses would face **loss of revenue and inventory devaluation**, forcing them to shift to **less sustainable synthetic alternatives** that contribute to pollution and plastic waste.

Furthermore, mink farming in the U.S. supports **over 100 family farms in 12 states, producing 1 million pelts annually and injecting millions of dollars into rural economies**. These farms rank among the **top 5% in global pelt quality and pricing**, further demonstrating their **excellence in animal care and sustainable production**.

Banning fur sales does not just impact mink farmers—it sets a **dangerous precedent** that could extend to other animal-based industries like **leather, wool, and down**. Today, it’s fur. **Tomorrow, it could be Hawaii’s pork and seafood consumption facing similar legislative bans**.

HB 719 Ignores Public Health Authorities and Scientific Evidence

HB 719 does nothing to improve public health or safety—in fact, it **ignores the findings of leading public health and agricultural authorities**.

U.S. Mink Farming is Not a Public Health Risk

U.S. mink farms operate under strict **biosecurity and disease prevention protocols**.

- **CDC, USDA, and NVSL confirm** that U.S. mink pose **no significant public health risk**.
- The **CDC found no strong evidence** linking mink to **COVID-19 spread** in humans.
- **There have been no avian influenza outbreaks** on U.S. mink farms.
- **Mandatory disease reporting protocols** are in place and farms have been instructed to adhere to **CDC’s One Health and USDA guidelines** to prevent disease spread.
- U.S. mink farms follow **certified biosecurity standards**, covering **farm layout, deliveries, employee safety, and visitor restrictions** to mitigate any potential risks.

Despite these **clear findings from public health authorities**, HB 719 **wrongly assumes** that mink farming poses a threat—when in reality, it is a **certified, biosecure industry that operates under science-backed health and safety standards**.

Fur Use is a Personal and Cultural Choice

For centuries, fur has played an essential role in **indigenous traditions, luxury fashion, and functional outerwear**. Consumers should have the right to choose **natural, sustainable products** rather than being forced to rely on synthetic, petroleum-based alternatives. A government-imposed ban undermines **personal freedoms and consumer choice**.

Conclusion

HB 719 is based on **misinformation** and will **harm farmers and small businesses, eliminate jobs, and promote synthetic alternatives that worsen plastic pollution**. U.S. mink farms uphold **animal welfare standards, reduce waste, and contribute to sustainable agriculture**.

We strongly urge the legislature to reject HB 719 and **support consumer choice, sustainability, and responsible farming**.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,
Challis Hobbs
Executive Director
Fur Commission USA



Testimony in Support of HB 719
Hawaii House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
Hearing Date: February 5, 2025

Liz Cabrera Holtz, Senior Campaigns Manager, World Animal Protection

World Animal Protection, an international animal advocacy organization with members in Hawaii, strongly supports HB 719, which would end the sale of new fur products.

Wild Animal Welfare

The fur industry is part of the global wildlife farming industry, in which at least [5.5 billion wild animals](#) are currently farmed for profit. Wild animals can only thrive in the wild. It's not possible for wild animals to 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 kept in large, factory-like fur farms. Animals are confined to tiny wire cages and unable to fulfill their 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 for a wild animal 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.



Hawaii Residents Have Already Rejected Fur

As awareness of the cruelty and health risks of fur farming grows, communities and consumers are increasingly rejecting fur. The fur industry likes to argue that consumers should be able to decide what to purchase. But Hawaii residents already have—and they've resoundingly rejected fur. Only a few stores still sell fur, among many other products.

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. However, 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 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 last year. Ecopel, a global faux fur textile company 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.

World Animal Protection urges the Committee to pass HB 719. Thank you for your consideration.

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

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

HB-719

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 5:09:37 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sylvia Dolena	Aloha Animal Advocates	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

All major religions, Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, honor animals as God's creatures in our care.

Mahalo for supporting this Bill 719 to prevent the products of animal exploitation on our island.



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February 5, 2025

Memorandum of Support – HB719

An Act relating to animal fur products.

Dear Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems,

The Animal Legal Defense Fund, the nation's preeminent legal advocacy organization for animals, appreciates the opportunity to submit this memorandum in support of HB719, a bill to prohibit the sale of new fur products in the state of Hawai'i. The organization's mission is to protect the lives and advance the interests of animals through the legal system. We are working nationwide to combat the cruel fur industry across multiple legal channels.

HB719 would make it unlawful to sell a new fur product in the state. If passed, Hawai'i would be the second state in the country to take a strong stance against the cruel and unnecessary fur trade within its borders.

Fur requires significant animal cruelty.

Whether trapped in the wild or bred on farms, animals exploited by the fur industry endure tremendous suffering. Millions of animals, including foxes, wolves, minks, and rabbits, are brutally killed by electrocution, poisoning, and gassing for their fur. The condition of the fur is prioritized over any humane considerations.

Trapping wild animals is largely regulated by the states with minimal protection for fur-bearing animals. In some states, it is legal to leave an animal in a snare trap for hours or even days without food or water, and the terrified animal can break teeth and bones trying to escape. Some animals will die before the trapper returns, and others will be strangled or bludgeoned to death. Sometimes even dogs and other unsuspecting pets get caught in these traps and die as a result.

On fur farms, the animals are typically kept in tiny wire cages that drastically limit their movement and prevent them from engaging in their natural behaviors. When they are caged outdoors, they have little to no protection from weather extremes. When they are caged indoors, ammonia from their waste fouls the air and can burn their eyes and throats. One of the most common species raised for fur, mink, lead solitary lives in the wild. Being caged in close confinement with so many other minks causes them significant psychological distress. These animals are so stressed they commonly engage in repetitive pacing and self-mutilation.

Fur puts our environment at risk

The fur industry also poses serious environmental threats. On fur factory farms, waste runoff from animals pollutes the soil and waterways. The tanning and dyeing process uses toxic and carcinogenic chemicals, like chromium and formaldehyde, to prevent the skin from decaying.

All our clients are innocent

Printed on recycled paper

Studies have found that among synthetic and natural textiles, fur is the worst-offending in 17 of the 18 environmental categories considered. The studies also found that the climate change impact of mink fur is five times higher than the second worst-offending textile (wool) and six times higher than a faux-fur alternative. This is largely due to the feed, land use, toxicity, and manure of the fur industry.

High-quality fur alternatives exist

Fortunately, innovative technology has produced an array of alternatives with the same warmth, look and feel as fur – without the cruelty or environmental concerns. There is no justification to continue to breed or trap and kill animals for their fur considering the availability of faux fur and alternative products that are virtually indistinguishable from animal fur. So indistinguishable that, in 2017, we called for a Baltimore furrier to be investigated for false advertising when they used an image of a faux fur jacket from the HBO series Game of Thrones to advertise the animal furs in their store.

Fur-free policies are on the rise

Consumers' concern for the animal cruelty and environmental threats from fur is leading fashion brands and legislators away from animal fur.

Hundreds of retailers, brands, and designers at all price points have announced fur-free policies, including: Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Gucci, Prada, Chanel, Coach, Burberry, Versace, Michael Kors, Armani, Calvin Klein, Kenneth Cole, Ralph Lauren, and JCPenney.

In 2019, California became the first state in the nation to ban the sale of fur, which went into effect this year. Abroad, multiple European countries, including Germany, Austria, Croatia, and the United Kingdom are in the process of phasing out or have already banned fur farming. São Paulo, Brazil also banned the sale of fur products in 2015.

Hawai'i, time to go fur-free.

The sale of fur products in Hawai'i is inconsistent with its position as a leader on animal welfare and environmental issues. By passing HB719, Hawai'i will lead the fur-free charge while reinforcing the shift to fur-free products that is occurring in the fashion industry. Hawai'i should seize this opportunity to more closely align the state's laws with its values. Please help make Hawai'i the next state to go fur-free by advancing this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Vierheilig
Legislative Affairs Manager
Animal Legal Defense Fund
lvierheilig@aldf.org



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, PRESIDENT OF THE RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
FEBRUARY 5, 2025
HB 719 RELATING TO ANIMAL FUR PRODUCTS.**

Good morning, Chair Kahaloe and members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems. I am Tina Yamaki, President of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Retail Merchants of Hawaii was founded in 1901 and is a statewide, not for profit trade organization committed to supporting the growth and development of the retail industry in Hawaii. Our membership includes small mom & pop stores, large box stores, resellers, luxury retail, department stores, shopping malls, on-line sellers, local, national, and international retailers, chains, and everyone in between.

We are opposed to HB 719. This measure prohibits the sale, offer, possession with intent to sell, display, distribution, or trade of fur products in the State, with certain exceptions; establishes civil penalties for violations; and is effective 6/30/2025.

We do not feel this measure is necessary as stores in Hawaii are already phasing out fur items and trying to liquidate their current inventory. Retailers are no longer the driving engine for trends. Customers determine the trends, and the type of inventory items retailers have in their stores.

We recognize that many top designer brands have already ceased the use of fur in their designs. We are seeing more faux fur being used or no fur-like products at all in their collections. We want to also point out that many of the alternatives to fur – faux/vegan fur – are more hazardous to the environment as they are made from petroleum-based materials like liquid plastic. We are also aware that **many of the animals are humanely raised on farms**, just like cows, chickens and pigs that end up in our grocery stores. It is also our understanding that the other parts of the animals are used for consumption.

With Hawaii's average temperature in the 80s, **there is NOT a large demand for fur in Hawaii and is mostly purchased by visitors who live in colder climates.** Unlike the mainland, there are hardly any stores in Hawaii who are selling fur items. **We are already seeing more and more stores throughout Hawaii no longer carrying fur and have liquidated their current inventory.** This includes **not only coats, and fur trim on clothing, but shoes, hair accessories, purses, belts, adornment on keepsakes, and more.**

We also must remember that some resellers and charities may get donations of fur products. The employees are not experts in determining what is real fur and what is faux fur as some faux fur almost resembles real fur.

We also wonder how this is going to be enforcing this measure and are those enforcing this law an expert in real fur products vs faux fur. Is the next step to ban leather or all meat products?

This measure would also impose hardship for those retailers who are unable to comply with the June 2026 deadline. Not all stores are able to send their fur merchandise outside of Hawaii to a sister store. This would mean that the goods like trinkets would either be sold at loss or trashed. We have seen over the last couple of years that sales have been down and slow for many of our retailers who are dependent on foreign visitors. Certain types of merchandise are not moving fast due to the lack of visitors to our islands.

Retailers do not need another government mandate. We are one of the hardest hit industries due to the pandemic and this type of ban would hurt our retailers during a time when many are still struggling to remain open. Stores are enduring astronomical increases in shipping costs, price of goods, shortage of employees, insurance increases, as well as the new increase in tariffs. Furthermore, many retailers are still struggling to pay back the debt from the loans they incurred during the pandemic. **Businesses cannot afford any more hardship as we are seeing more and more retailers closing their doors forever.** And as a result, many of our friends, family and neighbors no longer have jobs and are contributing to Hawaii's unemployment.

We hope that you will hold this bill. Mahalo again for this opportunity to testify.

HB-719

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 3:06:22 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arnaud Brunois	ECOPEL	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support bill HB719.

Our company has been supplying faux fur / imitation furs for a large number of american fashion brands including renowned names in the luxury industry.

It is totally possible to achieve a similar aesthetic using these alternative furs. The entirety of our faux fur production is made using recycled fibers and we are planing new bio-based fur made with vegetal ingredients, in the coming months.

For these reasons tehre is no excuse to still sell fur from animals.

HB-719

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 4:55:05 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith conrad	Fur industry	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please oppose the fur ban. As a fur producer, we have been consistantly harassed and threatened by supposed animal rights activists who are violent individuals. Our animals are well taken care of and their needs are always put first. Fur has been used by man since the dawn of time and still has a purpose. It's a natural material and environmental friendly unlike faux fur. Please oppose this ban, it affects more than just the Hawaiian people.

HB-719

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 5:03:54 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bas	Northern Wisconsin Mink Association	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I oppose the ban of Retail of Fur as it is an all natural and sustainable product.

It is more environmentally friendly that all the plastic being used in the current clothing industry.

Please reconsider this as it is our lively hood!!

Bill: House Bill 719
Committee: House Agriculture and Food Systems
Position: Favor
Date: February 4, 2025

Support for HB 719: End Fur Cruelty in Hawai'i

On behalf of Farm Sanctuary, a nonprofit committed to ending cruelty to animals and promoting compassionate living through rescue, education, and advocacy with more than 1.8 million members and supporters, we are proud to submit the following testimony in favor of ending the sale of new fur products.

First, we want to thank the Hawai'i state legislature for taking the time to consider HB 719 as well as to Representative Gregg Takayama for introducing this critical and popular piece of legislation.

Every year, more than 100 million animals are killed solely for their fur.¹ 82% of Hawai'i residents support ending the sale of new fur products from animals held captive and killed in cruel fur factory farms.²

Up to 95% of all fur comes from animals whose entire lives are spent caged and confined in factory farms where they suffer physical and mental stress until they are slaughtered. There are no federal laws protecting fur-bearing animals from inhumane slaughter, so many are subject to cruel and excruciating deaths; a horrible end to a life of torment, all in the name of fashion.

The egregious process in which fur is extracted from defenseless animals is reason enough to oppose the production of fur-based materials, but the fur trade poses additional dangers to human and environmental health, many of which cause irreparable damage. Just this year, scientists studying animals farmed for their fur

¹ "Ending the Fur Trade: A Guide to Ending Fur Sales in Your City." The Humane Society of the United States. <https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/furfree-hsus-toolkit-0920-digital.pdf>.

² Remington Research Group. "HI Statewide Public Opinion Survey," February 8, 2023. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ke5caVo-bHzOzETkMxggnYRMpXddPZQU/view?usp=embed_facebook.

identified 39 viruses classified as “potentially high risk” for transmission to humans, including seven coronavirus species.³ The potential transmission of harmful diseases between animals and humans in the fur farming industry is a serious public health concern, putting us at risk of introducing and spreading new diseases amongst human and animal populations.

Fur farming also has a sizable ecological footprint and contributes to environmental degradation in several ways. Fur production requires significant energy consumption, and the confinement of fur-bearing animals to farms for slaughter requires massive amounts of land, water and food. Animal waste runoff from farms can seep into local waterways and soil, creating lasting ecosystem disruptions and issues for residents in the surrounding areas. Additional pollutants are generated by hazardous toxins in the fur-bleaching and fur-dyeing processes, posing risks to both workers in fur processing plants and consumers that wear fur.

Hawai'i can and must follow the lead of the cities, states, countries, and retailers who have ended fur sales in their communities. Cities across the country such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Ann Arbor, and Cambridge have already passed legislation banning the sale of fur. In 2019, California became the first U.S. state to ban the sale of fur, and other states have followed suit. Fur ban bills have been introduced at the state level in Washington, New York, Connecticut, Oregon, and Rhode Island.⁴ Globally, Austria, Norway, the United Kingdom, and several other countries have also banned fur farming within their borders to respond to citizen concerns about animal welfare, public health, and environmental degradation.⁵ Over 300 fashion brands have gone “fur-free” in recent years, including top retailers like Gucci, Calvin Klein, and Michael

³ Humane Society International. “Scientists Raise Alarm over Public Health Dangers of the Fur Trade as 39 ‘Potentially High-Risk’ Viruses Identified in Animals on Chinese Fur Farms,” September 5, 2024. <https://www.hsi.org/news-resources/scientists-raise-alarm-over-public-health-dangers-of-the-fur-trade-as-39-potentially-high-risk-viruses-identified-in-animals-on-chinese-fur-farms/>.

⁴ Block, Kitty. “Several States Introduce Bills Banning Fur, Voicing Concerns over Cruelty, Pandemic Risk.” The Humane Society of the United States, February 4, 2021. <https://www.humanesociety.org/blog/several-states-introduce-bills-banning-fur-voicing-concerns-over-cruelty-pandemic-risk>.

⁵ The Humane Society of the United States. “Going Fur-Free.” <https://www.humanesociety.org/all-our-fights/going-fur-free>.

Kors, and several are taking their commitment a step further by endorsing legislation that bans the import of and sale of farmed fur products.⁶

National polling shows that the majority of voters in the U.S. support a federal ban on fur farming, and 71% of Americans are opposed to killing animals for their fur.⁷ As highlighted, an even greater proportion of Hawaiians support ending fur sales.

Many sustainable, ethical alternatives to fur have already become the norm in fashion. HB 719 will have a minimal impact on the day-to-day lives of the average shopper in the Āloha State but will be a significant step toward saving millions of animals and protecting our public health, worker safety, and environmental integrity.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Gene Baur
CEO and Cofounder, Farm Sanctuary

⁶ Four Paws International - Animal Welfare Organisation. "Global Fashion Brands Demand EU-Wide Fur Ban," March 30, 2023.

<https://www.four-paws.org/our-stories/press-releases/march-2023/global-fashion-brands-demand-eu-wide-fur-ban>.

⁷ Mischler, Jennifer. "Fur Farming: Is It Still Legal in the United States?," March 17, 2023.

<https://sentientmedia.org/fur-farming/>.



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**Support for HB719, Prohibiting the Sale of Fur Products
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Susan Rhee, Hawai'i State Director
The Humane Society of the United States**

Aloha Chair Kahaloha and Members of the Committee,

My name is Susan Rhee and I am the Hawai'i State Director for the Humane Society of the United States. On behalf of my organization and our Hawai'i supporters, I ask you to please vote in favor of HB719. This bill ends the sale of new fur products from animals such as foxes, mink and raccoon dogs who are held captive and killed in fur factory farms. Across the world, tens of millions of animals are bred and killed in fur factory farms for the sole purpose of turning their pelts into fur products like hats, keychains, and other novelty items. Investigations from multiple countries, including the most recent case in Ohio, show these animals in deplorable conditions, riddled with disease, injuries, or dead in their cages.

Specifically, HB719 will prohibit the sale of fashion and home décor products made from animal fur. The bill contains commonsense exemptions including for used fur products and products from common farm animals, like wool and mohair.

HB719 will help countless animals by removing our state from the global fur trade with little to no impact on our state's economy. No jobs will be lost in Hawai'i with the passage of this bill as there are no fur farms or fur-specific retailers in our state. Few stores continue to sell fur in Hawai'i, and most of the fur products sold at these stores are smaller accessories that can easily be replaced with humane, eco-friendly faux fur alternatives.

In a recent poll of nearly 800 registered Hawai'i voters, 82% said they support legislation in our state that prohibits the sale of new fur products. HB719 protects the values of the majority of Hawai'i as voters who care about animal welfare and environmental health. Similar to Hawai'i's ban on the wildlife products like ivory and shark fins, this bill will end our state's role in supporting the global fur trade.

Even in the U.S., fur factory farms are typically not subject to any required inspections and little to no state or federal regulations hold these facilities accountable to the basic animal welfare standards that apply to animals raised for food products. Not a single state requires veterinary care for sick or injured animals on fur factory farms, and there are no legal requirements for humane slaughter of these animals, who are killed by gassing or electrocution.

The fur industry also causes major environmental pollution. Not only does the tanning and dying process use toxic chemicals to prevent skin decay, but the runoff from animals on fur factory farms pollutes waterways and soil. Many of these chemicals are known carcinogens and are harmful to their surrounding communities. Additionally, fur farms enable dangerous diseases, like COVID and avian flu, to spread like wildfire, threatening public health.

With this bill, Hawai'i has a chance to take an affirmative stand against the cruel practices and environmental harm inherent in the fur industry. And by passing this bill, Hawai'i 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 the passage of HB719. Thank you.

¹ Remington Research Group, 2023. Hawai'i Public Opinion, February 2023. Survey conducted February 1 through February 5, 2023. 801 likely 2024 General Election voters participated in the survey.

February 4, 2025

To: House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

From: Katie Nolan, General Campaigner, In Defense of Animals
katie@idausa.com / (601) 207-0076

Re: Written Testimony in Support of HB 719, Relating to Animal Fur Products

Dear Chair Kirstin Kahaloe and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of In Defense of Animals and our 975 supporters in Hawaii to support HB 719, which would prohibit the sale of fur products. I ask for your support in passing this bill.

Fur is an outdated fashion trend that contributes to immense animal suffering and pollution of our ecosystems. Animals like minks and foxes spend their short lives cramped in small cages, and often spread disease that pose risks to both humans and wild animal populations. Waste runoff from fur farms causes degradation of water systems, and toxic chemicals are used to treat the furs. Additionally, the bill is not too restrictive as it will not prohibit the sale of leather or shearling, and allows for used fur products to still be sold at secondhand businesses.

To conclude, our organization respectfully requests your support of HB 719 to ban the sale of new fur products in Hawaii. Thank you for your careful consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,



Katie Nolan
In Defense of Animals





4 February 2025

House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: VETERINARY SUPPORT: HB 719, Relating to Animal Fur Products

Dear Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Alliance (HSVMA), I am writing to express our strong support for HB 719, prohibiting the sale of new fur products in the state of Hawaii. HSVMA is an association of more than 7,000 veterinary medical professionals worldwide, including in Hawaii, focused on the health and welfare of all animals.

As experts in the field of animal health and welfare, we recognize that there are severe animal welfare deficiencies inherent in the fur trade, including the ways in which wild animals are cruelly confined in fur factory farms and killed using inhumane methods. We also have serious concerns about disease transmission through susceptible fur-farmed animal populations, such as mink, fox, and raccoon dogs, as well as the possibility of contagious disease spread between these captive wildlife and humans. For these reasons, we support ending this archaic and inhumane industry and strongly endorse passage of a statewide fur sales ban in Hawaii.

Inhumane Housing and Improper Husbandry at Fur Farms

Tens of millions of animals worldwide, including foxes, chinchillas, minks, raccoon dogs and rabbits, are killed for their fur every year. The overwhelming majority of these animals are confined in very small cage systems that result in unsanitary living conditions and fail to satisfy many of their most basic needs, particularly their need to display normal behaviors essential to their mental and physical well-being.

Investigations on fur farms worldwide--including those considered "certified" to maintain higher animal welfare standards--reveal distressing evidence of persistently poor welfare conditions. Species such as fox and mink retain their basic wild needs regardless of being bred and kept in captivity, and it is highly inaccurate for the fur industry to refer to an arctic fox bred on a fur farm as a 'domesticated' animal that has environmental and behavioral needs different from its wild relatives.

Wild animals on fur farms spend their lives in wire-floored cages thousands of times smaller than their natural territories. They are denied the opportunity to express natural behaviors such as hunting, digging, and swimming. They are often kept in unnatural social groups; for example,

mink are forced to live in extremely close proximity to one another which would be highly unlikely in the wild. The contrived and inhumane living conditions on fur farms inevitably lead animals to suffer severe psychological distress. Instances of unproductive repetitive behaviors, a sign of compromised psychological well-being, have been well-documented on fur farms, as have cannibalism, untreated wounds, foot deformities and eye infections.

In addition to the inhumane living conditions on fur factory farms, these animals are killed in incredibly cruel ways that violate basic euthanasia standards for the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).¹ Mink are typically gassed using carbon dioxide which results in extended periods of suffering, and foxes are anally electrocuted without any prior sedation.

Cruel Trapping of Fur-Bearers in the Wild and Inhumane Slaughter on Fur Farms

Other welfare deficiencies inherent in the fur industry include the trapping methods used to capture animals in the wild. Some species are targeted with crippling leg-hold traps which are not sanctioned by the AVMA or the HSVMA. Once trapped, animals are often left to languish for long periods of time without food or water before they are killed, often by bludgeoning to limit damage to their pelts.

One Health Concerns for Disease Transmission through Fur Farming

Fur factory farming poses a serious biosecurity risk due to the high potential for disease transmission as these facilities serve as reservoirs for zoonotic disease. During the recent global pandemic, SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes COVID-19 in humans, spread through hundreds of fur farms in 12 countries – including the U.S. – and resulted in government-ordered killing of nearly 20 million mink to try to stem the outbreak. Genetic analysis has shown the disease jumping back and forth between humans and mink with the potential for the virus to mutate in mink prior to infecting humans. In a 2020 risk assessment, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) warned that the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in mink farms could lead to new variants that could compromise the efficacy of a vaccine.

Now, highly pathogenic avian influenza has been detected on numerous fur farms, including among mink, foxes and raccoon dogs. Millions of fur-farmed animals have been culled to prevent the spread of the disease where it has been detected. However, state and federal agencies in the U.S. are not even requiring the testing of fur farms for avian influenza, despite its rapid spread. Given the structural design of fur farms, diseases spread within these facilities can

¹ Mink have respiratory adaptations that give them high tolerance for CO₂ and hypoxemia, which may therefore require extended exposure times during the slaughter process, resulting in prolonged suffering. The AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals advise that “methods [of euthanasia] based on hypoxia will not be appropriate for species that are tolerant of prolonged periods of hypoxemia,” American Veterinary Medical Association, AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2020 Edition (2020), p.16; The AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals states that, “It is imperative that animals be unconscious and insensible to pain before being electrocuted,” and “Electroimmobilization that paralyzes an animal without first inducing unconsciousness is extremely aversive and is unacceptable.” Ibid, p.45-46.



also spread to wild mink, foxes and other species in the local environment, threatening wildlife populations.

Fashion Industry Turns to Fur Alternatives to Satisfy Consumer Demand

Consumer concern for animal welfare has already led many fashion brands to stop using animal fur once and for all. These companies recognize that contemporary alternatives to fur provide luxury, warmth, and style without animal cruelty. In 2018 alone, well-known brands such as Chanel, Coach, Burberry, Versace, and Donna Karan joined Gucci, Michael Kors, and Armani in announcing fur-free policies. Legislative bans help hasten and solidify this positive transition while driving the development of more humane alternatives to fur.

Hawaii has a progressive history regarding animal welfare measures, and we hope it will soon include prohibiting the sale of new fur products in the Aloha State.

Sincerely,

Barbara Hodges, DVM, MBA
HSVMA Program Director, Advocacy & Outreach

ANAMODA, Inc.

247 West 30th Street
Suite 4R
New York, NY 10001
212-695-6936

February 4, 2025

Written testimony opposing H.B.719 Relating to Animal Fur Products

As a lifelong furrier, it is difficult to understand how anyone, yet alone elected officials would again consider H.B.719 which criminalizes and names the trade of certain fur products as unlawful in the State of Hawaii.

My name is Kim Salvo and I manage one of the country's premier wholesale fur companies, Anamoda - in New York City's fur district. This is a 33 year profession I love and whereby I do not have any accounts in the state of Hawaii, I must explain to you how fur ban bills like this are so misconstrued, ignorant, biased and misinformed and why they need to be opposed.

Fur fashions do not break any laws. They do not harm people. They are not a hazard. Like any solid business, the fur industry boasts a long time mark in fashion, employing a host of uniquely talented fur workers and related skills. The artisan craft of making a fur garment is irreplaceable by any chemical contaminating impostor material. The fur trade acts responsibly in breeding, harvesting and trapping our natural resource which is 100% renewable, responsible for wildlife conservation and "green" before anyone started using that trendy catch phrase.

For any government entity to make our product illegal and unlawful to produce, sell, purchase or possibly even wear is unconstitutional and against any consumer's freedom of choice. People have donned fur fashions since the beginning of civilization. As a people of strong heritage, culture and customs, Hawaii boasts a significant history in the fur trade through the Pacific region establishing business, industry and enterprise.

Unlike the animal activist bullies, furriers do not go around harassing and forcing people to make fashion choices. Fur is a unique product that reveals a person's individual style; a choice to wear a natural hand crafted everlasting product for years on end and a very practical choice to keep warm – something synthetic impostor micro plastic based fabrics cannot do.

This act contains the rhetoric of the non-profit animal activist groups and provides no justification of such a mandate. The mere fact that 5 separate animal families are specifically named as acceptable to use in production and sale of fashion items certifies that no one really cares about animals. Clearly, Representatives Takayama, Garrett, Lowen, Marten and Perruso still do not understand the fur industry and fail to acknowledge the negative impact a fur ban will impose on animal populations and habits.

Contrary to what this legislative body was coerced into believing, I would like to present 4 areas that will clarify how horrible this divisive decision on a free market and free enterprise which does no harm to the general population is.

First, you need to understand the difference between animal abuse and neglect which no one ever wants to see and animal husbandry which all animal usage industries are responsible for. You need to understand how the pelts used in making fur items are supplied from both fur ranches which operate 365 days a year under 3rd party control regulations, with constant veterinary care without ever skinning animals alive and also from nature through trapping and conservation – keeping in mind that

conservation does not mean saving, but is the best use practices of the natural resources available to you. Since trappers never trap for fun - - by limiting the use of the pelts harvested through trapping, government has to step in to regulate the populations and do so at the cost of the taxpayers with all of the harvesting going to waste. This would negatively affect ecosystems and wildlife habitats all across North America. There are documented cases where states restricted or prohibited fur trapping and in just 6 short months, the ecosystem took a turn for the worse. This is something government must stop from happening and fur bans will only exasperate the chaos.

Next, you need to understand how all of the fur-free fashion designers, design houses, clothing brands and retail department stores who publicly announced their decision to stop using or selling selective fur products, did not do so over ethical concerns. They made this detrimental decision because it is impossible to operate a business that is constantly under attack by the terroristic tactics of extreme animal activists who harass, harm, threaten, destroy and intrude on their businesses, employees, customers, property and owners - - Sadly, we have limited protection from this illegal and obscene activity thus forcing fur products off the shelves.

Thirdly, the exclusions in this act allow for picking and choosing the animals that no one cares about. What makes a mink more loved than a cow?...because cowhide products would be allowed. What makes a fox more favorable than a sheep?...because sheepskin products would be permitted. What make a chinchilla more cared for than a pig?...because pigskin products can still be sold. The carve-outs prove there is no justification in passing this act.

And lastly, I will leave you with a very profound statement. If you are looking to kill animals, then you should pass this act. Every time restrictions or outright stoppage of products or services from animal industries come to pass, the one thing they do for certain is kill animals. Let me explain: When circuses were threatened to stop using animals in their shows, what happened to all the circus animals? They died. When the dog races were forced to shut down because of the protests, what happened to all of the greyhound dogs? They died. When protesters demanded that foie gras no longer be sold in restaurants and specialty markets, what happened to all of the geese? They died. And so if you are looking to kill animals and be responsible for their wasteful death, pass this act, because the only outcome of fur bans is the death of animals.

I hope this brings a rational perspective and knowledgeable vision to the impact of fur bans and the terror placed on animal usage industries. And please do not fall for the false pretense that synthetic micro-plastic based fabrications are the perfect substitute for natural fur. Imagine if the activists offered up to you to cook tofu in the ground because it will taste just like Kālua pig. This would not fly and neither would these imposter substitutes.

I implore this committee for a vote of NO and to OPPOSE this mockery of our right to make, sell, purchase or wear legal fur fashions and related items in our great Aloha State.

Thank you for your attention and opposition to HB719.

Sincerely,



Kim Salvo
Fur Fashion Director
ANAMODA
anamoda.ny
#furisfashion



Testimony for the Hawaii Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems In Support of HB 719, A Bill to Prohibit the Sale of New Fur Products in Hawaii

Hearing Date: February 5, 2025

Kate Dylewsky

Assistant Director of Government Affairs, Animal Welfare Institute

The Animal Welfare Institute, a national nonprofit animal advocacy organization that represents hundreds of members in Hawaii, strongly supports HB 719 to prohibit the sale of new fur products within the state. The fashion world has begun to transition away from this cruel and dangerous practice, and it is time for Hawaii to do the same.

Animal Welfare

Fur coats and trim are vanity products, and millions of animals suffer and die needlessly for these “luxury” garments. Between 10 and 24 foxes, or 36 to 65 mink, are killed to make a single fur coat.

Fur sold for clothing originates from two sources: wild-caught and farmed animals. Wild animals are caught with brutal devices such as steel-jaw leghold traps and strangling snares. Body-gripping traps—such as snares, Conibear traps, and steel-jaw leghold traps—are inhumane and inherently nonselective, meaning they indiscriminately injure and kill nontarget animals, including endangered and threatened species and even pets. Steel-jaw leghold traps operate by slamming shut with bone-crushing force on the limb of any animal that trips the device. In agony and suffering trauma, victims may chew off their own trapped limb to escape.¹ Strangling snares tighten around the neck or body of their victims and strangulation can take hours, if not days, causing extreme and prolonged agony for the captured animal, including from grotesque swelling of the neck, head, and eyes, referred to by trappers as “jellyhead.”² Conibear traps are intended to break or crush an animal’s spinal column, but—as with other body-gripping traps and snares—their efficacy and accuracy are unreliable. Past studies have shown that multiple nontarget animals are captured for every one target animal caught in a Conibear trap and that these devices frequently fail to kill victims instantaneously.³

In addition, millions of animals annually are bred on fur farms to supply the fashion industry. Animals are kept in small wire cages, and behavioral studies have found them to be living in a state of “continuous” and “extreme” fear characterized by trembling, defecating, and withdrawing to the back of the cage in response to humans.⁴ Numerous scientific reports and investigations have found that serious physical and mental health problems are inherent in fur production and that the animals have been found to exhibit issues such as infections; severe wounds including missing ears, missing eyes, and

¹ G. Iossa et al., *Mammal Trapping: A Review of Animal Welfare Standards of Killing and Restraining Traps*, 16 ANIMAL WELFARE 335, Table 2 (2007).

² GILBERT PROULX, INTOLERABLE CRUELTY: THE TRUTH BEHIND KILLING NECK SNARES AND STRYCHNINE 28 (Alpha Wildlife Productions 2017).

³ Gilbert Proulx and Dwight Rodtka, *Killing Traps and Snares in North America: The Need for Stricter Checking Time Periods*, 9 ANIMALS 570 (2019).

⁴ Nimon A J, and Broom DM, The welfare of farmed mink (*Mustela vison*) in relation to housing and management; A Review. *Animal Welfare* 9: 205–228 (1999).

shortened tails (sometimes from fighting); self-mutilation; cannibalism of dead siblings or offspring; and other stress-related stereotypical behavior.^{5,6}

The methods of slaughter are no more humane. When the animals' pelts are at their prime, within the first year of life, the animals are killed with CO₂ or CO gas in a killing box, electrocuted, beaten, or have their necks broken. Because 30 to 50 animals at a time may be forced into a single kill box, animals may pile up and be killed in part by suffocation. The most common way farmed foxes are killed is by anal electrocution, which involves an apparatus with two electrodes, one being inserted in the rectum while the other is applied to the mouth, followed by cervical dislocation (neck breaking).

Public Health

Not only are these intensive farming operations a needlessly cruel way of creating clothes, but fur farms are also a public health hazard.

Mink pose a high risk to humans because their upper respiratory tract is physiologically similar to ours, which means they can become infected by—and potentially transmit to people—some of the same respiratory viruses. Furthermore, mink's susceptibility to acquiring and spreading both human and animal respiratory viruses render them potentially potent "mixing vessels" for generating novel pandemic viruses.⁷

In 2023, infectious disease experts at Imperial College London, in a paper published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, concluded that mink farming poses a high risk for future viral pandemics.⁸ Fur farms house mink in crowded environments that create an ideal setting for pathogens to circulate among and across species.⁹ Wire cages are packed together and often stacked on top of one another so that waste falls on the animals below. The confined conditions cause caged mink to become highly stressed and thus immune-compromised, making them even more susceptible to infection. The absence of legal requirements for veterinary care only compounds the problem.

We have witnessed the danger of widespread pathogen transmission on fur farms in just the past few years. A deadly avian influenza virus (H5N1) has infected tens of thousands of mink on nearly three dozen fur farms since 2022. During an October 2022 outbreak on a mink farm in Spain, the virus gained at least one mutation that favors mammal-to-mammal spread, allowing it to spread from mink to mink.¹⁰ Before this outbreak, the virus spread primarily through contact with infected birds, not

⁵ Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare. The Welfare of Animals Kept for Fur Production. *European Commission, Health & Consumer Protection Directorate-General* (2001). https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/295ea587-ea69-4f2e-9ed1-7d8745a90f3d_en?filename=sci-com_scah_out67_en.pdf

⁶ Shocking investigation reveals foxes with diseased eyes, deformed feet, missing ears & obesity on supposedly 'high-welfare' Finnish fur farms. *Humane Society International* (November 22, 2021). <https://www.hsi.org/news-resources/shocking-investigation-reveals-foxes-with-diseased-eyes-deformed-feet-missing-ears-obesity-on-supposedly-high-welfare-finnish-fur-farms/>

⁷ Sun, H., et al. (2021). Mink is a highly susceptible host species to circulating human and avian influenza viruses. *Emerging Microbes & Infections*, 10(1), 472–480. <https://doi.org/10.1080/22221751.2021.1899058>

⁸ Peacock, T. P., & Barclay, W. S. (2023). Mink farming poses risks for future viral pandemics. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 120(30). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2303408120>

⁹ Runquist, P. (2021, August). HSVMA statement - fur-farmed animals and risk of disease. *The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association*. https://www.hsvma.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1179%3Afur_riskofdisease

¹⁰ Agüero, M., et al. (2023). Highly pathogenic avian influenza A (H5N1) virus infection in farmed minks, Spain, October 2022. *Eurosurveillance*, 28(3). <https://doi.org/10.2807/1560-7917.es.2023.28.3.2300001>

between mammals. Scientists sounded the alarm on this H5N1 mink farm outbreak, calling it a “clear mechanism for an H5 pandemic to start” and “a warning bell.”¹¹

H5N1 infections were also detected at multiple mink farms in Finland in 2023,¹² demonstrating the risk for this dangerous virus to continue causing outbreaks on mink farms, each time with the possibility of mutating into something transmissible between humans.

Additionally, mink are highly susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 (the coronavirus that causes COVID-19), with outbreaks on more than 480 known mink fur farms across 12 countries. The virus has infected tens of thousands of captive mink in the United States,¹³ and millions of mink in Canada, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Sweden.¹⁴

Alarmingly, mink are capable of passing a mutated form of the virus back to humans.¹⁵ Mink-to-human transmission of the virus has been reported in at least six countries so far, including the United States. Four people in Michigan were infected with a unique strain of SARS-CoV-2 traced back to mink.¹⁶ Spillover from mink farms to humans could introduce new variants, undermining the effectiveness of vaccines and jeopardizing efforts to contain the pandemic.¹⁷

Like humans, mink can become infected with COVID-19 without showing symptoms, thus potentially serving as an undetected reservoir of the disease. Escapees from these farms can also transmit the virus to wild populations, potentially fostering reservoirs of the virus off the farms. In December 2020, a wild mink captured near a mink farm in Utah tested positive for a variant of COVID-19 indistinguishable from the virus found in infected mink in a nearby farm—demonstrating the broader dangers posed.¹⁸

Fur farms risk worsening the current pandemic and ushering in the next one. It’s time to end the sale of fur, not only for the sake of the animals but also to protect public health and safety.

Similar Bans

Cities, states and even countries are now banning fur sales to reduce the market for fur products. In 2019, California became the first state to ban fur sales after similar measures passed in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Berkeley and West Hollywood. Cities in Massachusetts, Michigan, and Florida have since

¹¹ Kupferschmidt, K. (2023, January 24). ‘Incredibly concerning’: Bird flu outbreak at Spanish mink farm triggers pandemic fears. *Science*. <https://www.science.org/content/article/incredibly-concerning-bird-flu-outbreak-spanish-mink-farm-triggers-pandemic-fears>

¹² Lindh, E., et al. (2023). Highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N1) virus infection on multiple fur farms in the South and Central Ostrobothnia regions of Finland, July 2023. *Euro Surveillance*, 28(31). <https://doi.org/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2023.28.31.2300400>

¹³ Coronavirus confirmed in mink at Oregon Fur Farm. *RochesterFirst*. (2020, November 28). <https://www.rochesterfirst.com/news/coronavirus-confirmed-in-mink-at-oregon-fur-farm/>

¹⁴ Žigaitė, S., et al. (2023). Evaluation of SARS-CoV-2 passive surveillance in Lithuanian mink farms, 2020–2021. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2023.1181826>

¹⁵ Oude Munnink, B. B., et al. (2021). Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 on mink farms between humans and mink and back to humans. *Science*, 371(6525), 172–177. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abe5901>

¹⁶ Shamus, K. J. (2022, April 20). 4 Michiganders with COVID-19 strain unique to mink were likely 1st US spillover cases. *Detroit Free Press*. <https://www.freep.com/story/news/health/2022/04/17/michigan-covid-cases-tied-to-mink-human-spillover/7338784001/>

¹⁷ Joint statement on the prioritization of monitoring SARS-CoV-2 infection in wildlife and preventing the formation of Animal Reservoirs. *World Health Organization*. (2022, March 7). <https://www.who.int/news/item/07-03-2022-joint-statement-on-the-prioritization-of-monitoring-sars-cov-2-infection-in-wildlife-and-preventing-the-formation-of-animal-reservoirs>

¹⁸ Garcia de Jesús, E. (2020, December 16). Utah mink is the first wild animal to test positive for coronavirus. *Science News*. <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/covid-19-coronavirus-mink-utah-first-wild-animal-test-positive>

passed similar legislation. Furthermore, many major fashion brands and retailers have committed to go fur-free, including Nordstrom, Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Saks Fifth Avenue, Gucci, Versace, and Giorgio Armani. It is time for Hawaii to follow suit and address the serious animal welfare and public health threats posed by the fur industry.

The Animal Welfare Institute respectfully urges the Committee to pass HB 719, and I welcome any questions on the information presented in this testimony.

Contact:

Kate Dylewsky

Assistant Director of Government Affairs, Animal Welfare Institute

kate@awionline.org

202-446-2142



FUR INSTITUTE OF CANADA
INSTITUT DE LA FOURRURE
DU CANADA

House Agriculture Committee
Conference Room 325
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI, USA

Via email

Re: Testimony in **Opposition** to Bill 719 HB RELATING TO ANIMAL FUR PRODUCTS.

On behalf of the Fur Institute of Canada, I am writing to express my opposition to 719 HB RELATING TO ANIMAL FUR PRODUCTS. While I understand the intention behind such a ban, I believe it is important to consider the potential negative consequences that may arise from its implementation, both economically and environmentally.

The Fur Institute of Canada, established in 1983, is Canada's lead expert on humane trap research and furbearer conservation and is the official trap-testing agency for the Government of Canada and all provincial/territorial governments. The FIC manages Canada's humane trap research and testing program and Canada's obligations under the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards. The Institute is mandated to provide accurate and credible information relating to the economic, social, cultural and environmental issues surrounding the harvesting and farming of fur in Canada.

Firstly, it is crucial to acknowledge that the fur industry plays a significant role in our shared North American economy, providing livelihoods for many individuals involved in various stages of production, including farmers, trappers, processors, and retailers. A state-wide ban in Hawaii would not only result in job losses but also impact the overall economic stability of the industry and the communities that rely on it, while undermining the free and fair trade regime between our two great nations.



FUR INSTITUTE OF CANADA
INSTITUT DE LA FOURRURE
DU CANADA

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the fur industry has made significant progress in adopting ethical and sustainable practices. Canadian and US fur farms adhere to strict regulations and guidelines, ensuring the welfare of the animals and minimizing environmental impact. By implementing bans, you risk undermining these efforts and pushing the demand towards unregulated and unethical alternatives.

Additionally, the fur trade has a long history in North America, deeply rooted in cultural and traditional practices. Many Canadian Indigenous communities rely on trapping and the fur trade to contribute to their livelihoods, culture and heritage and to assert their inherent and treaty rights. By banning the sale of fur in your state, you will be inadvertently contributing to a shameful history of minimizing opportunities for Indigenous peoples and weakening their traditional economies.

Instead of a complete ban, I encourage you to focus on promoting responsible and sustainable practices within the fur industry. By working together with industry stakeholders, you can establish and enforce strict regulations that safeguard animal welfare, ensure ethical sourcing, and minimize environmental impact. This approach would allow you to support both the industry and the values of compassion and sustainability.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge you to avoid the animal extremist rhetoric and reconsider the proposed ban on the retail sale of natural fur.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Doug Chiasson

Executive Director

Fur Institute of Canada

HB-719

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 3:42:20 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Kahaloa, Vice Chair Representative Kusch and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems.

Please support HB 719 relating to animal fur products.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki

HB-719

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:29:30 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Please support HB719. The fur industry is a particularly cruel industry.

Fur products aren't necessary now that there are so many fur substitutes that have the same look and feel

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to present my testimony.

Sincerely,

Andrea Quinn

Kihei, Maui

HB-719

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 1:34:06 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Joel Fischer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

PLEASE SUPPORT THIS BILL. THE INHUMANE KILLING OF SENSITIVE CREATURES FOR THEIR FUR IS COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE.

LET'S GET TOGETHER ON THE SENSITIVE SIDE OF HUMANITY TO END THIS INHUMANE PRACTICE.

MAHALO, joel fischer

HB-719

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 3:58:59 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bob Zimbal	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a 3rd generation mink farmer in Wisconsin. My family has been raising mink for over 71 years on our family farm. We take great pride in the care that we give our animals. Mink farmers were the first animal agriculture to have welfare guidelines. Our welfare guidelines are some of the strictest guidelines in animal agriculture.

Natural fur has been used to cover our bodies and keep us warm since the beginning of mankind, unlike polyester, spandex & other manmade products that are made with crude oil. Natural fur is biodegradable, renewable & is handed down from one generation to another.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Zimbal

HB-719

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:37:40 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/5/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naomi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Animals on fur farms are confined to cramped, filthy wire cages. Fur farmers poison, electrocute, or suffocate them to end their short, miserable lives. Animals caught in nature in snares that suffocate or steel traps that cut to the bone also suffer tremendously. They often languish for days from blood loss, dehydration, frostbite, infection, shock, or attacks by predators. If they're still alive when the trapper returns, they're strangled, shot, or bludgeoned to death.

The fur industry also wreaks havoc on the planet. Producing an animal-fur product can be up to 10 times more damaging to the environment than producing a faux-fur item. Runoff from farms and the highly toxic chemicals used to prevent animal skins from rotting often end up polluting local water supplies and killing aquatic animals.

hundreds of designers and retailers—including Armani, Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, Macy's, Michael Kors, Prada, and Versace—refuse to sell any fur or fur-trimmed clothing or accessories.

As a state we must protect our animals and native animals, we must ban fur.

it is 2025 there are so much other resources to use instead of fur.