

# FUR FARMING: IMPACTS & SOLUTIONS



## BACKGROUND

Farming animals for their fur is a waning industry with numerous ramifications for human and environmental health. This brief report aims to provide information on the hazards of fur farming, as well as legislative fixes.



## PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARD

Among the animal species that are susceptible to natural infection of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, farmed minks pose a considerable threat to public health. Cases have been reported on 427 European and American mink farms in humans and animals across nine countries and four US states including Utah, where even wild animals in the vicinity of farms were found infected. Established infection in a wild-animal population would be very difficult to control.

Toxic chemicals such as formaldehyde and chromium are used during the processing of pelts, which then enter the human body through abrasion, inhalation, or absorption through the skin. This can cause lasting chronic health effects such as allergies, hormonal imbalances, and cancer.



## ETHICAL CONCERNS

Physical and behavioral abnormalities such as infected wounds, missing limbs, eye infections, bent feet, mouth deformities, self-mutilation, cannibalism, and other stress-related behavior, such as pacing along the cage wall, repetitive circling or nodding of the head are exhibited in farmed animals.

Fur harvesting methods include gassing, neck-breaking, and anal or genital electrocution. Because these methods are unreliable in killing the animals, they are often skinned while still alive.

SARS-CoV-2 has a special attraction for cells in the respiratory systems of mink, just as with humans. As a result, mink experience severe respiratory distress before dying, which is particularly problematic on US farms where the animals are not being culled to prevent an outbreak.



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## REASONABLE EXCLUSIONS

Fur products do not include any of the following: leather, cowhide, deerskin, sheepskin, goatskin, not the pelt or skin of an animal that is preserved through taxidermy. The prohibition will not apply to products used for religious or spiritual purposes or used furs.



## ECONOMIC DECLINE

Due to increasing consumer demand over 1500 apparel companies such as Nordstrom, Macy's, Neiman Marcus, and Saks Fifth Avenue have all banned fur products. Pelt production is down 54.5% and pelt value is down 64.26% in the last decade in the U.S. Washington accounts for less than 1% of the U.S. fur business.

## SOLUTION

Many countries and U.S. localities have initiated fur production and sales bans: British Columbia, Italy, France, Ireland, Poland, the United Kingdom, California, and more with the legislation currently being considered in Massachusetts, New York, Hawaii, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Montenegro, and Ukraine.

Recognizing the harmful impacts on animals and the environment, the legislature intends to end fur farming, to provide assistance to existing farmers transitioning to other types of farming or livelihood in Washington by 2024, by passing HB 1034.



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PETITION**

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