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**HOUSE BILL 1375**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Walen, Fitzgibbon, Bateman, and Pollet

AN ACT Relating to protecting public health by prohibiting certain activities related to fur production; amending RCW 16.72.010; adding a new section to chapter 16.72 RCW; creating a new section; repealing RCW 16.72.020, 16.72.030, and 16.72.040; prescribing penalties; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is a public health crisis that has resulted in immense loss of human life and economic damage that will be felt for a very long time. Fur farms are not immune to the impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. During the summer and fall of 2020, farms in at least nine countries and at least four states in the United States, including Oregon, have been host to COVID-19 outbreaks at mink farms. As recently as December 2020, the virus that causes COVID-19 was discovered in mink samples from a farm in British Columbia, Canada, where workers on the farm tested positive for the virus. According to the Oregon department of agriculture, mink can transmit the disease to other animals. Investigations on mink farms around the world where the virus causing COVID-19 is present identified dogs and cats who tested positive for the virus. While there has not yet been evidence of a mink transmitting the virus to a human, these outbreaks have proven deadly to the animals and pose an unacceptable and unknown risk to the humans involved in the farming operations.

(2) The legislature recognizes that it is necessary to take steps to stop the spread of the disease and intends to do so while minimizing overarching economic impacts and promote the health and safety of the people and animals of the state. The risk to public health is too high to continue this practice.

**Sec.**  RCW 16.72.010 and 1955 c 321 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

((~~As used in this chapter:~~

~~"Director" means director of agriculture.~~

~~"Department" means department of agriculture.~~))

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Fur" means any animal skin or part thereof with hair, fleece, or fur fibers attached thereto, either in its raw or processed state.

(2)(a) "Fur product" means any article of clothing or covering for any part of the body, or any fashion accessory including, but not limited to, handbags, shoes, slippers, hats, earmuffs, scarves, shawls, gloves, jewelry, keychains, toys or trinkets, and home accessories and decor, that is made in whole or in part of fur.

(b) "Fur product" does not include any of the following:

(i) An animal skin or part thereof that is to be converted into leather, which in processing will have the hair, fleece, or fur fiber completely removed;

(ii) Cowhide with hair attached thereto;

(iii) Deerskin, sheepskin, or goatskin with hair attached thereto; and

(iv) The pelt or skin of an animal that is preserved through taxidermy.

(3) "Produce or manufacture" means to engage in any activity related to processing raw materials to create a fur product for distribution or sale.

(4) "Taxidermy" means the practice of preparing, stuffing, and mounting the skin, in lifelike form, of any fish, reptile, amphibian, bird, or mammal.

(5) "Ultimate consumer" means a person who buys for their own use, or for the use of another, but not for resale or trade.

(6) "Used fur product" means fur in any form that has been worn or used by an ultimate consumer.

(7) "Person" includes any individual, firm corporation, trust, association, copartnership, society, or other organization of individuals and any other business unit, device, or arrangement.

(8) "Fur farming" means breeding, raising, and rearing of mink, marten, fox, and chinchilla in captivity or enclosures.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 16.72 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, a person may neither participate in fur farming, nor produce or manufacture a fur product.

(2) The prohibitions in this section do not apply to any of the following:

(a) A fur product used for religious purposes;

(b) A fur product used for traditional tribal, cultural, or spiritual purposes by a member of a federally recognized Native American tribe;

(c) Any activity expressly authorized by federal law; and

(d) A used fur product.

(3) A person who sells or trades any used fur product or fur product described in subsection (2) of this section shall maintain a record of each sale or trade of one of those exempt fur products for at least one year. A violation of this subsection is not subject to a criminal or civil penalty.

(4) A person violating this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. Each fur product that constitutes a violation must be treated as a separate and distinct offense.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The following acts or parts of acts are each repealed:

(1)RCW 16.72.020 (Quarantine controls) and 1955 c 321 s 3;

(2)RCW 16.72.030 (Fox, mink, marten declared personalty) and 1955 c 321 s 4; and

(3)RCW 16.72.040 (Branding—Recording) and 1955 c 321 s 5.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act takes effect January 1, 2022.

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