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**SENATE BILL 5708**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Stanford, Liias, and Lovelett

AN ACT Relating to the unlawful trade of fur products; adding a new chapter to Title 16 RCW; 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 animals slaughtered for their fur endure tremendous suffering. Animals raised on fur farms typically spend their entire lives in cramped, filthy cages. Fur farmers typically use the cheapest killing methods available, including suffocation, electrocution, gas, and poison.

(2) Fur farms are reservoirs and transmission vectors for dangerous zoonotic diseases, including SARS coronaviruses, that threaten public health, including in Washington. COVID-19 infections have been confirmed at fur farms in Europe and the United States, and scientific studies have linked animals most commonly farmed for their fur, including mink, raccoon, dogs, and foxes, to a variety of coronaviruses.

(3) Considering the wide array of alternatives for fashion and apparel, the legislature finds that the demand for fur products does not justify the unnecessary killing and cruel treatment of animals.

(4) Eliminating the sale of fur products in Washington will promote community awareness of animal welfare and, in turn, will foster a more humane environment in Washington.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  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, 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;

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

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

(3) "Nonprofit organization" means any corporation that is organized under 26 U.S.C. Sec. 501(c)(3) that is created for charitable, religious, philanthropic, educational, or similar purposes.

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

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

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) It is unlawful to sell, offer for sale, display for sale, trade, or otherwise distribute for monetary or nonmonetary consideration a fur product in the state. For the purposes of this section, the sale of a fur product is deemed to occur in Washington if the:

(a) Buyer takes physical possession of the fur product in Washington; or

(b) Seller is located in Washington.

(2) The prohibition set forth in subsection (1) of this section does not apply to the following:

(a) A used fur product offered for sale by an individual but excluding a retail transaction; a nonprofit organization; or a second hand store, including a pawn shop;

(b) A fur product intended for religious or spiritual purposes; or

(c) Any activity expressly authorized by federal law.

(3) A violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

(4) Each fur product that constitutes a violation of this section must be treated as a separate violation.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act takes effect January 1, 2023.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 through 4 of this act constitute a new chapter in Title 16 RCW.

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