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**SENATE BILL 5161**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Lias, Rolfes, Conway, Hunt, Keiser, Nguyen, Salomon, and Valdez

Prefiled 01/05/23. Read first time 01/09/23. Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks.

1 AN ACT Relating to prohibiting fur farming; amending RCW  
2 16.72.010; adding new sections to chapter 16.72 RCW; creating a new  
3 section; repealing RCW 16.72.020, 16.72.030, and 16.72.040;  
4 prescribing penalties; providing an effective date; and providing  
5 expiration dates.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the demand  
8 for products made of animal fur has been in decline and that the fur  
9 industry represents a very small portion of Washington's economy. For  
10 example, according to the United States department of agriculture,  
11 mink pelt production decreased 15 percent from 2018 to 2019, and the  
12 value of mink pelts produced decreased 30 percent in the same time  
13 frame. In Washington, mink pelt production accounted for only 1.4  
14 percent of total production in the United States in 2018, decreasing  
15 to less than one percent in 2019.

16 (2) The legislature finds that there are growing concerns for the  
17 welfare of the animals used in fur farming. For instance, there are  
18 no federal or state humane slaughter laws that regulate the industry.  
19 In addition, there are significant concerns related to the  
20 environmental impact of fur farming. For these and other reasons, the

1 legislature finds that it is in the public interest to end fur  
2 farming.

3 (3) Recognizing the harmful impacts on animals and the  
4 environment, the legislature intends to end fur farming, to provide  
5 assistance to existing farmers transitioning to other types of  
6 farming or livelihood, and to end the production and manufacture of  
7 fur products in Washington by 2024.

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 (2) "Fur farm" means any operation, including the land,  
19 buildings, support facilities, and other equipment, in which mink,  
20 marten, fox, or chinchilla are owned, controlled, raised, bred,  
21 propagated, kept, slaughtered, skinned, or sold for the value of  
22 their fur.

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

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

28 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 16.72  
29 RCW to read as follows:

30 (1) A person may not own or operate a fur farm. The prohibitions  
31 in this section do not apply to any activity expressly authorized by  
32 federal law, nor to any activity related to producing fur for  
33 traditional tribal, cultural, or spiritual uses by a member of a  
34 federally recognized Indian tribe.

35 (2) A person violating this section is guilty of a misdemeanor.

36 NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. A new section is added to chapter 16.72  
37 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) The fur farm transition grant program is established in the  
2 department of agriculture. Subject to the availability of amounts  
3 appropriated for this specific purpose and as allowed by law, the  
4 purpose of the program is to help existing fur farmers impacted by  
5 this act transition out of fur farming. Grant funds may be used only  
6 for technical assistance, permitting, new facility construction,  
7 equipment, and labor costs associated with transitioning out of fur  
8 farming. The department of agriculture may adopt rules to carry out  
9 the grant program.

10 (2) This section expires June 30, 2026.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 16.72  
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 (1) The fur farm transition account is created in the custody of  
14 the state treasurer. All receipts, any legislative appropriations,  
15 federal funds, private donations, or any other private or public  
16 source directed to the fur farm transition grant program must be  
17 deposited into the account. Expenditures from the account may be used  
18 only for the fur farm transition grant program established in section  
19 4 of this act. Only the director of the department of agriculture or  
20 the director's designee may authorize expenditures from the account.  
21 The account is subject to allotment procedures under chapter 43.88  
22 RCW, but an appropriation is not required for expenditures.

23 (2) This section expires June 30, 2026.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** The following acts or parts of acts are  
25 each repealed:

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

27 (2) RCW 16.72.030 (Fox, mink, marten declared personalty) and  
28 1955 c 321 s 4; and

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

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Sections 1 through 3 and 6 of this act  
31 take effect January 1, 2024.

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