

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1775

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to prohibiting activities related to the production and manufacturing of fur products.

Brief Description: Prohibiting activities related to the production and manufacturing of fur products.

Sponsors: Representatives Walen, Parshley, Ramel, Springer, Peterson, Fosse, Ormsby, Pollet, Macri, Hill and Leavitt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/11/25, 2/19/25 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires fur farmers to both be a member of an organization that recognizes a professional certification program with environmental and animal welfare standards and be in compliance with inspection and certification requirements.
- Prohibits the production and manufacture of farmed fur products, with certain exceptions.
- Creates the Fur Farm Transition Grant Program at the Department of Agriculture.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Reeves, Chair; Morgan, Vice Chair; Bernbaum, Nance, Richards and Springer.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Engell, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McClintock, Orcutt and Schmick.

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Fur farming, defined as the breeding, raising, and rearing of mink, marten, fox, and chinchilla in captivity or enclosures, is authorized by statute as an agricultural pursuit in Washington. The Director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (Director) has general authority to adopt rules that prevent the introduction or spreading of infectious diseases into the state, including rules regarding the inspection and testing of all animals in the state or being imported into the state. The Director also has specific authority to exercise quarantine controls over fur farms.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Beginning January 1, 2026, anyone engaging in fur farming must be a member of an organization that recognizes a professional certification program with animal welfare and environmental standards. Fur farms must be in full compliance with inspection and certification requirements. "Fur" is defined as any animal skin or part thereof with hair, fleece, or fur fibers attached, whether in a raw or processed state. "Fur product" means any article of clothing or fashion accessory that is made in whole or in part of fur. Fur product does not include either cowhide, sheepskin, deerskin, or goatskin with hair attached, or taxidermy.

Producing and manufacturing farmed fur products is prohibited unless the fur comes from a farm that is a member of an organization that recognizes a professional certification program with animal welfare and environmental standards and is in full compliance with inspection and certification requirements. Activities expressly authorized by federal law; fur products used for religious purposes; fur products used by a member of a federally recognized tribe for traditional tribal, cultural, or spiritual purposes; products used in fishing gear; and products made from used fur are exempt from the prohibition. Any person who sells or trades used fur products, or products that are exempt from the prohibition on fur-product production or manufacture, must keep a record of their transactions for at least one year. A violation of any of the prohibitions is a misdemeanor, and each fur product that constitutes a violation is considered a separate offense.

The Fur Farm Transition Grant Program (Grant Program), with an associated nonappropriated account, is created within the Department of Agriculture. Subject to availability of funds and as allowed by law, funds in the account may be used for certain expenses associated with helping existing fur farmers transition out of fur farming, such as

technical assistance, permitting, and facilities. The Grant Program and account expire on June 30, 2028.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

As compared to the original bill, the substitute:

- replaces the prohibition on fur farming with a requirement that a fur farm be a member of an organization recognizing a professional certification program that includes animal welfare and environmental standards and requires fur farms to be fully in compliance with inspection and certification requirements;
- requires the production and manufacture of fur or fur-related products made from farmed fur to be sourced from a farm that is a member of an organization recognizing a professional certification program that includes animal welfare and environmental standards and fully in compliance with inspection and certification requirements;
- exempts products used in fishing gear from the prohibition on producing and manufacturing fur products; and
- deletes the intent section.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains multiple effective dates. Please see the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is not intended to prevent tribes from using fur in the course of engaging in their cultural practices. It also does not intend to prevent hunters, fishers, and trappers from using furs acquired from their licensed hunting and trapping pursuits. The bill is intended to create an incentive for fur farmers to transition out of the practice of commercial fur farming, protect animal welfare, protect the environment, and remove the supply line of commercially produced, farmed fur.

(Opposed) Fur producers and manufacturers are small businesses and their customers ask for products to be made from both ranch-raised and wild furs. The fur industry is already a small industry, and the market decides its fate. This will have impacts on sportsmen and fly-tying businesses and increase the use of oil-based synthetic fur. Ethically sourced natural furs are better for the environment than synthetic fur. The fur industry has supported animal welfare research and is working with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on a highly pathogenic avian influenza vaccine. Slaughter of animals meets USDA guidelines.

(Other) There are tribal vendors who create fur products for sale. It is unclear whether large ungulates are included in the bill. The reporting requirements may cause unintentional tax ramifications, and may be in conflict with current tax reporting requirements that apply to tribal traders.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Amy Walen, prime sponsor; Robert McCormick, Animal Defenders International; Colburn Clark; Amanda Fox, Animal Rights Initiative; Cat Kelly, Animal Legal Defense Fund; and Kerrie Espuga, Animal Rights Initiative.

(Opposed) Josh Mills; Dr. Hugh Hildebrandt, Veterinarian; Challis Hobbs, Fur Commission USA; Josh Phillips, Spawn Fly Fish; Frank Herbert; Bruce Vandervort, Washington State Trappers Association; Karen Parker; Joe Ruef; Ryan Holt, Fur Farmer; Marie Neumiller, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation; and Jack Thompson, Jack Russell Home Services Inc.

(Other) Michael Moran, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.