



NEW ENGLAND BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS

March 10, 2022

To Chairman Craven and the members of the House Judiciary Committee

Re: BHA Opposition of RI - 2022 – H7361 –Trade in Animal Fur Act

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) seeks to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting. Our members recognize the need to protect and enhance our outdoor heritage and wildlife in the few open spaces we have remaining, and support the North American Wildlife Conservation Model, which asserts that wildlife is held in public trust as a scientifically managed natural resource that can be enjoyed by all Americans.

While we recognize that the intent of this bill is to address concerns with the commercial fur farming industry, which is outside of our area of focus, we oppose its passage because of the unintended negative affects it could have on Rhode Island's hunters and trappers. Hunting and trapping for wild furbearers is regulated by the state's Division of Fish & Wildlife through rules that control open seasons and bag limits for each species, methods of take and implement stringent licensing, checking and reporting requirements. These rules and regulations are guided by science to balance the needs of the ecosystem as a whole and manage populations, and to help reduce conflicts between wildlife and humans, pets and property.

As written, the bill would ban the sale of products from wild furbearers that are harvested within the existing laws and regulations of the State without a valid and substantial reason. We believe that hunting and trapping for furbearers is a legitimate traditional pursuit that should be managed by the State following the guidance of the North America Model of Wildlife Conservation, and that the regulated sale of fur products from legal hunting and trapping should not be prohibited because of concerns that have to do with the commercial fur farming industry.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

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Chair, New England Chapter Board
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers