



NEW ENGLAND BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS

February 14, 2023

To Chairman Craven and the members of the House Judiciary Committee

Re: BHA Opposition to RI - 2023 – H5258 –Trade in Animal Fur Products Act

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) seeks to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting, and our members recognize the need to protect and enhance our outdoor heritage and wildlife in the few open spaces we have remaining. We 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 H5258 is to address concerns with the commercial fur farming industry, which is outside of BHA's area of focus, we respectfully 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 managed by the Department of Environmental Management's Division of Fish & Wildlife through regulations that control open seasons and bag limits for each species, methods of take, and 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, as well as the sale of fur products harvested legally by hunting and trapping in other areas. 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 sustainably harvested fur products from legal hunting and trapping should not be prohibited in Rhode Island 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