

AB 44: CA Fur Products Prohibition Act

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of this law? What will it do?

- AB 44 would make it unlawful to sell or manufacture a new fur product in the state, with exemptions for used fur and fur used for religious purposes. If passed, California will be the first state in the country to ban the cruel and unnecessary fur trade within its borders.

Why do we need this law?

- Over 100 million animals are killed annually for their fur. **The vast majority of fur is not a byproduct of the meat industry; instead, it comes from animals who are factory-farmed specifically for their fur, or trapped in the wild.**
- Animal cruelty is the norm in the fur industry. On fur factory farms, undomesticated animals are forced to live in cramped, wire-bottom cages, deprived of the ability to engage in natural behaviors. These animals are then killed in inhumane ways, such as crude gassing or anal/genital electrocution. In the wild, archaic and indiscriminate traps often maim or kill non-target animals—even endangered species and pets.
- **Recent polling shows that 71% of Californians support a ban on the sale of fur products in the state.**
- **The current state of fur production is inconsistent with California’s role as a leader in animal welfare.** California voters have repeatedly shown deep concern about the well-being and humane treatment of animals, including animals killed for their fur.
- **The fur industry also poses serious environmental threats.** On fur farms, waste runoff from animals pollutes the soil and waterways. The tanning and dyeing process uses toxic and carcinogenic chemicals, like chromium and formaldehyde, to prevent the skin from decaying.
- Consumers’ growing concern about the cruelty and environmental degradation caused by the fur industry is leading fashion brands to move away from animal fur once and for all. **InStyle magazine, Stella McCartney, DVF-Diane von Furstenberg, 3.1 Phillip Lim, HUGO BOSS, Patagonia, H&M, GAP, J.Crew, Madewell, and Inditex/Zara (the world’s largest apparel retailer), have publicly supported AB 44,** and numerous other top brands and retailers—including Gucci, Burberry, Chanel, Versace, Armani, St. John Knits, Net-a-Porter, Farfetch, Michael Kors and so many others— have announced fur-free policies, opting instead for alternatives that are warm and fashionable, without the cruel consequences.
- By passing AB 44 and eliminating the sale of new fur products throughout California, we have the opportunity to increase community awareness of animal welfare, bolster the demand for sustainable and innovative alternatives, and foster a more humane environment in California.

What laws regulate the production or sale of fur?

- **The welfare of animals in the fur trade is largely unregulated.** In the U.S., there are no federal laws protecting animals on fur farms, and fur-bearing animals are not subject to humane slaughter laws.
- In 1998, California voters banned the use of steel-jawed leghold traps, body-gripping traps and conibear traps for fur production. In 2015, California ended the killing of bobcats for their fur. Four California cities—**West Hollywood, Berkeley, San Francisco, and Los Angeles—have already passed ordinances banning the sale of fur within city limits.**
- At the federal level, it is illegal to import/export to or from the U.S. any dog or cat fur product, and it is illegal to mislabel or falsely advertise the species or the country of origin of a fur product for sale.
- Internationally, São Paulo, Brazil has banned the sale of fur, India banned fur imports, and many countries—including Norway (once the top producer of fur in the world), Belgium, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands—have banned fur farming.

What about claims by the fur industry that animal welfare conditions have improved due to the implementation of “humane” regulations?

- The fur industry has long tried to brand fur products as “humane” by creating its own self-funded certification programs. Furmark is the fur industry’s latest attempt at “greenwashing.” **Contrary to claims, numerous investigations have shown that “certified” farms do not mean better animal welfare.**
- In fact, several top fashion brands that sold fur reviewed certification schemes under Furmark and still chose to go fur-free since they **fail to address the serious animal welfare problems inherent with trapping or confining an undomesticated animal in a small, barren cage for his or her entire life.** Death by anal electrocution or gassing and wildlife caught in indiscriminate leghold traps for days without food or water are standard practices for the fur trade.
- Many European countries have banned fur farming based in part on the understanding that it is impossible to raise fur-bearing animals in captive conditions that ensure high standards of welfare while remaining financially viable.
- When consumers and fashion companies look into fur production – every disingenuous marketing scheme, every vague claim, every certification program – they quickly realize that **there is no way to humanely source fur.**

How will this affect California retailers?

- Under AB 44, businesses will have until January 1, 2022 to sell off any remaining fur inventory, and to modify or diversify their business practices. Retailers can and will transition to innovative, animal-friendly alternatives that are better for the environment and animals.
- The fur industry has been plagued by animal cruelty concerns for decades, and conscious consumers increasingly want products that don’t involve abuse. As more brands and retailers go fur-free, more countries ban fur production, and more cities and states ban fur sales, there is a great opportunity for companies to transition to humane products.
- The apparel industry is rapidly moving toward more humane and sustainable products. Popular faux fur company, House of Fluff, was founded by the former creative director of the furrier J. Mendel. The company uses the same techniques it used with animal fur but now with faux fur and with a greater focus on the sustainability. As well, Ecopel, a leader in faux fur, has introduced faux fur made from recycled plastics collected from the oceans, and the Faux Fur Institute has created faux fur alternatives made from plant-based and recycled materials.
- Workers in the fur industry possess transferrable skills, such as hand sewing or pattern making, which are still needed in the manufacturing of faux furs and a variety of other fabrics.

For more information on AB 44, please visit FurFreeCA.com

List of Major Fur-Free Companies and AB 44 Endorsements:

Diane von Furstenberg*
GAP*
Hugo Boss*
H&M*
InStyle Magazine*
J. Crew*
Madewell*
Patagonia*
Stella McCartney*
Inditex/Zara*
3.1 Phillip Lim*

Gucci
Burberry
Versace
TJ Maxx
Bottega Veneta
Donna Karan/DKNY
Michael Kors
Yoox Net-A-Porter Group
Burlington
Jimmy Choo
Timberland
The North Face
Armani
Kenneth Cole
Tommy Hilfiger
Ralph Lauren
Calvin Klein
Chanel
Coach
Columbia Sportswear
FarFetch
St. John Knits
Furla
Maison Margiela
Givenchy
Guess
Intermix
Lacoste
ASOS
Topshop
Vivienne Westwood
and many more

*Companies that have endorsed AB 44