



Fur Commission USA

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April 8, 2024

Senator Founj Hawj, Chair
Committee on Environment, Climate, and Legacy Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: OPPOSITION TO SF 4897

Hello Chair Hawj, and Members of the Committee,

We, the Fur Commission USA alongside our agriculture allies and the dedicated mink farmers of Minnesota, wish to express our opposition to SF 4897. Our concerns stem from a significant lack of consultation and a clear understanding of the proposed legislation's rules and its implications on stakeholders. Considering this, we respectfully request the opportunity for a comprehensive meeting prior to any actions.

Here are the facts:

Public Health and U.S. Farm-Raised Mink:

- Health and animal agencies, including CDC, USDA, NVSL, and state agencies, confirm U.S. **mink pose no significant public health risk**.
- CDC found no strong evidence linking mink to COVID-19 spread in humans.
- No avian influenza outbreaks on U.S. mink farms.
- **Mandatory reporting protocols for COVID-19 or avian influenza** on farms exist.
- **Farm Certification biosecurity requirements** cover farm layout, deliveries, employees, and visitors.

Animal Welfare Standards

- More than 96% of mink pelts are produced on certified farms.
- **The certification program is peer-reviewed** by PAACO, the organization that peer-reviews the major U.S. animal agriculture certification programs.
- **Farms are third-party inspected** for compliance.
- Standards developed by experts: scientists, veterinarians, and animal welfare specialists.
- High standards for animal care: nutrition, housing, biosecurity, veterinary care, and humane harvesting.
- All farms **euthanize their mink humanely with carbon monoxide**, following AVMA guidelines.
- Housing allows natural behaviors: snug nest boxes and larger pens for activity.
- Farming adheres to state, federal, and local laws, including environmental rules.

U.S. Mink Farming Overview

- Over **100 family farms** in 14 states, producing 1.33 million pelts.
- Globally Recognized Quality: Top 5% in global prices.
- All farms **are family-owned**.
- Creates jobs and injects millions into local economies.
- Mink fur is durable and **biodegradable**.

Production Practices

- Breeding in early spring, litters in late spring, harvest in fall.
- Raised on high-quality diets, clean water, and necessary medical care.
- **Transforms food industry byproducts into mink feed**, reducing waste.
- Pelts sold globally; remains used for compost, pet food, crab bait, conditioners, etc.
- Manure is used as a crop fertilizer.

In summary, the Fur Commission USA and its allies oppose SF 4897 due to the lack of consultation and clarity on the bill. Evidence shows U.S. mink farming prioritizes public health, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability, with regulated, certified practices supporting local economies. **We urge for a dialogue to discuss these concerns before any legislative actions are taken.**

Sincerely,

Challis Hobbs
Executive Director
Fur Commission USA