
**Rural Development, Agriculture &
Natural Resources Committee**

HB 1718

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

Sponsors: Representatives Walen, Wicks, Berg, Fitzgibbon and Bateman.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits fur farming and the production and manufacture of fur products, with certain exceptions.
- Creates the Fur Farm Transition Grant Program at the Department of Agriculture.

Hearing Date: 1/11/22

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Fur farming, defined in statute 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 Bill:

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.

Fur farming is prohibited effective January 1, 2023, and statutes authorizing and governing fur farming are repealed. The production and manufacture of fur products is also prohibited with some exceptions. "Fur" is defined as any animal skin or part thereof with hair, fleece, or fur fibers attached, whether in a raw or processed state, and "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.

A violation of any of the prohibitions is a misdemeanor, and each fur product that constitutes a violation is considered a separate offense. 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; 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.

The Fur Farm Transition 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 expires on June 30, 2025.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 4, 2022.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2023, except for sections 4 and 5 creating the Fur Farm Transition Grant and Account, which take effect 90 days after the session in which the bill is passed.