

I can not believe that legislators would ever consider a bill that directs the government to take private property and then offer no compensation for the farm families who will lose their livelihoods under SB 832. Mink farms are multigenerational operations with a long history in Oregon. Local farm families would have to give up everything and kill & bury their animals immediately. To add insult to injury, SB 832 suggests that these families could apply for loans (after losing everything) to retrain for a new profession. It's offensive that the Committee would even consider this bill.

There is no scientific reason to shut down local mink farms. Zoonotic disease transmission is not uncommon, which is why Oregon's farmers and ranchers take biosecurity so seriously. The one mink farm with positive Covid-19 cases in Nov. 2020, went into quarantine immediately and worked with state veterinarians and federal and state agencies to contain the virus. The farm is now clear of the virus, and we should consider this a success as opposed to misrepresenting this incident as a statewide threat. If animal rights activists continue to try to ban fur everywhere, we will surely have a black market issue, in the near future, and the spreading of zoonotic diseases will be unregulated and uncontrolled indefinitely.

Not only is the premise of this bill false, but Oregon's mink farms are actually part of a larger cycle of sustainability. Mink consume food waste that would otherwise be wasted and sent to the dump. Their manure is used as a fertilizer for other sectors of agriculture. It's a full cycle.

It's upsetting to see special interest groups attempt to shut down family farms, particularly after such a devastating year, and to play on people's fears of Covid-19. We worry that this is the beginning of a new approach to close down other sectors of agriculture in the name of animals' rights. With America currently facing record unemployment, to destroy this supply chain, and force people out of their jobs, seems to be heading in the absolute wrong direction. Please vote NO to SB 832 and help save the fur industry. My family and many others are relying on you to do so.