

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE OF UTAH**



**REPRESENTATIVE  
NORMAN K THURSTON**  
DISTRICT 64  
UTAH COUNTY

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Dear Senators,

I strongly encourage you to oppose SB832 in its current form. While I can appreciate your efforts to protect agricultural workers in your state from the effects of COVID-19, this bill is a misguided attempt to use a crisis to eradicate an entire legitimate industry. As you may be aware, there has only been one documented case of the virus that causes COVID-19 being found among mink in our state. Fortunately, due to the conscientious efforts of the farm involved, our State Department of Agriculture and Food was able to respond based on science and data in a way that protected agricultural workers without eliminating an industry.

There is no scientific justification based on the COVID-19 pandemic to eliminate an entire industry. Given that, I must conclude that this bill has nothing to do with protecting public health and is just another attempt by animal rights groups to eliminate animal husbandry in your state. Section 6 contains a list of other types of farms that could be targeted next, namely, foxes, chinchilla, rabbits, caracul, and ratites. Based on my interactions with those who have supported the bill, banning these farms would only be the beginning. There will be an energized push to get rid of all farm-raised animals, including chickens, turkeys, pigs, and cattle, among many others.

The mink industry is a valuable part of both Utah and Oregon's economy, contributing millions of dollars and providing thousands of jobs, primarily associated with multigenerational family farms. Eliminating mink farming would have a devastating effect on those families and their ability to be self-reliant members of society.

Any attempt by Oregon to ban mink farming will have a detrimental effect on the mink industry here in Utah, and I would highly encourage you to not use the power of government to shut down an entire industry based on nothing more than single-viewpoint ideology.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Norm Thurston".

Rep. Norm Thurston  
Utah House of Representatives