



Testimony of Mike Brown

Organization: Head of Communications and Public Affairs, Natural Fibers Alliance

Bill: HB 3390

Chair, Representative Janelle Bynum

Members of the House Judiciary Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 3390, a bill that would prohibit the sale, offer for sale, display for sale, trade, or distribution of certain animal fur products in Oregon. The Natural Fibers Alliance is a coalition comprised of producers and associations that support the use of natural sustainable materials in clothing, accessories, and other goods.

We oppose this bill for several reasons:

HB 3390 is based on decades of scare tactics and misinformation from activist who use the mink industry and legislation like this to increase fundraising efforts. The truth is clear, mink farmers in Oregon and throughout North America, view animal health and welfare as a top priority. Farms have strict operating guidelines and certification protocols governing the care of mink. Farmers follow comprehensive animal husbandry practices developed leading veterinarians, and welfare experts, with detailed standards for nutrition, housing, biosecurity, veterinary care, and humane harvesting. Mink farming is subject to state, federal, and local laws, including environmental regulations.

Second, legislation like this could violate the dormant commerce clause. Currently, the US Supreme Court is hearing a case based on a 2018 California ballot initiative that banned the sale of pork in California, unless pregnant pigs were allowed at least 24 square feet (2.2 square meters) of space. The intent of the ballot initiative was to

force out-of-state producers to make costly changes to pen sizes even though California imports more than 99% of the pork it consumes.

Supreme court justices have now asked whether allowing the California law would mean other states could impose their own demands -- such as requiring that workers be paid a certain wage, vaccinated, or be allowed to opt out of a union -- before products could be sold.

Banning the retail sale of fur potentially violates the dormant commerce clause, that says the US Constitution limits the power of states to regulate commerce outside their borders without congressional authorization.

Third, banning natural fibers such as fur will harm current efforts to improve environmental sustainability. Natural fibers provide a viable, biodegradable alternative to synthetic materials associated with landfill, microplastics, overconsumption, and pollution.

Forth, HB 3390 effectively ends trapping in the state of Oregon. Trappers and predator control personnel under the trapping/furbearing licenses of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife collect fur to be used or sold. Without the ability to sell products trapped, the industry would be destroyed overnight.

Lastly, some activists have been found to repeatedly exaggerate or even fabricate COVID on mink farm claims. After some initial farm infections in the fall of 2020, the industry now boasts a vaccination rate of nearly 100% of certified mink farms. Leaders, to include the Prime minister of Denmark have also since apologized for misleading the public over the issue.

Please don't fall for the misinformation. This bill is an overreach that intentionally closes Oregon family owned businesses and will have a devastating impact on both the fly fishing and trapping community in Oregon. This bill does not serve the public interest and will undoubtedly lead to the banning of leather dress shoes, ugg boots, down feather coats and other products. All of which have been deliberately left out of these types of proposals to gain support without opposition. I encourage you to ask those who advocate for this type of legislation what is their end goal, and they will tell you, the complete elimination of commercial farming and fishery.

Proposals like this have real intended and unintended consequences that have led to decades of harassment against retailers and manufactures. To include the most recent violent attacks against farmers in Ohio and Michigan. Rather than gaslight extremist behavior, Oregon must send a message and promote natural animal-based fibers as

the state of New York has done with the recent passage and promotion of the New York Textile Act of 2022.

I urge you to vote no.