

March 8, 2019

Assembly Water, Parks, & Wildlife Committee
California State Assembly
1020 N. Street
Room 160
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Letter of Support from Born Free USA on Assembly Bills A.B. 273 and A.B. 44

Dear Assembly Water, Parks, & Wildlife Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support on two assembly bills, A.B. 273 and A.B. 44. My name is Julie Kluck, and I am a Campaigns Associate at Born Free USA, a non-profit organization that seeks to end the suffering of wild animals in captivity, rescue individual animals in need, and protect wildlife in their natural habitats – by keeping wildlife in the wild and encouraging compassionate conservation globally. Born Free is an industry leader in the anti-trapping and anti-fur movement, having devoted years to investigating the trapping and fur industry's. Among other work, we have produced investigative reports on trapping throughout the United States and reports that analyze trapping legislation for each individual state, and have been tracking trapping incidents throughout the United States for more than forty years.

On behalf of Born Free and its California supporters, we would like to support the introduced Assembly Bill 273, Fur-bearing and Nongame Mammals: Recreational and Commercial Fur Trapping: Prohibition, and Assembly Bill 44, Fur Products: Prohibition, whereby both bills complement each other. Existing law requires every person who traps fur-bearing mammals or nongame mammals or who sell, buy, trade, or deal in raw furs of those mammals to have a trapping license and/or a fur license respectively. A.B. 273 will, "prohibit the trapping of any fur-bearing mammal or nongame mammal for purposes of recreation or commerce in fur and would prohibit the sale of the raw fur of any fur-bearing mammal or nongame mammal."¹ This bill will also eliminate the need for trapping, fur dealer, and fur agent licenses, thereby saving the state several thousands of dollars in financial and administrative costs.²

The complementary bill, A.B. 44, will, "make it unlawful to sell, offer for sale, display for sale, trade, give, donate, or otherwise distribute a fur product in the state."³ This bill will also make it unlawful to manufacture a

¹ "AB-273 Fur-bearing and nongame mammals: recreational and commercial fur trapping: prohibition." *California Legislative Information*, http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB273. Accessed March 7, 2019.

² *Id.* In 2017, a total of 133 trapping licenses were sold in California for purposes of recreation and commerce in fur. A total of four fur dealer licenses were also sold. The total revenue received by the Department of Fish and Wildlife for the sale of these trapping licenses was just \$15,544 and for the sale of the fur dealer licenses was \$709. This would only cover a fraction of the administrative costs in management of the licenses.

³ "AB-44 Fur products: prohibition." *California Legislative Information*, http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB44 . Accessed March 7, 2019.

fur product in the state.⁴ Current state law specifies that products or handicraft items made from fur-bearing mammals or nongame mammals can be purchased or sold at any time.

Born Free previously conducted investigations into the trapping industry, and uncovered the shocking and brutal animal cruelty involved with trapping. Trapped animals are left to languish for hours, and even days, in pain with no food, water, or shelter, and are exposed to predatory threats in which they would not be able to defend themselves. Moreover, they are killed in a variety of cruel and inhumane methods. To witness the brutality firsthand, please visit Born Free's Trapping Campaign resources webpage, <https://www.bornfreeusa.org/campaigns/trapping/resources/>, to view our investigations *Victims of Vanity: The Investigation* and *Victims of Vanity II: Our Findings*, and to view our Trapping Report.

Relatedly, the introduced A.B. 273 legislation and its elimination of commercial trapping will significantly decrease trapping of non-targeted species. As part of Born Free's work, we compiled and continually update a database of reports of non-targeted species, such as dogs, cats, endangered species, and even humans, which were trapped over the past 40 years.⁵ After analyzing the data, we learned that trapping is not only barbaric, but also indiscriminate.⁶ Furthermore, the complementary A.B. 44 legislation will eliminate the need for commercial trapping due to prohibiting the sale, offer for sale, display for sale, trade, give, donate, or otherwise distribute a fur product in the state.

Due to Born Free's extensive knowledge of wildlife trapping, the fur trade, and the consequences that both can create, we respectfully request that the California Assembly Water, Parks, & Wildlife committee pass Assembly Bill 273 and Assembly Bill 44. We must work together to create a more humane and sustainable environment that will better serve both the state and its public.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



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⁴ *Id.*

⁵ "Non-targeted Trapping Incidents Database." *Born Free USA*, <https://www.bornfreeusa.org/trapping-incidents-search/>. Accessed March 7, 2019.

⁶ Here is a report of one such incident in Los Angeles, California: in November 2017, a kitten was caught in a steel-jawed leg-hold trap. Although initially saved from the trap, the kitten had severe injuries and unfortunately euthanized due to being caught in the trap and unable to eat. The kitten was underweight and unable to eat on its own. It was determined that the trap was placed near a koi pond to protect the fish, but deputies were unsure whether that was legal. Unfortunately, for many trapped animals – both targeted and non-targeted species – their outlook is not bright, just like for this kitten, and most do not survive.