

March 19, 2019

Assembly Judiciary Committee
California State Assembly
1020 N. Street
Room 104
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Letter of Support from Born Free USA on Assembly Bill 44

Dear Assembly Judiciary Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support on assembly bill, 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 a leader in the anti-fur movement, having devoted years to investigating the fur trade industry. Among other work, we have produced reports on the fur trade focused on North America, where the reports analyze fur farm legislation and fur farm animal welfare practices.

On behalf of Born Free and its California supporters, we would like to support the introduced Assembly Bill 44, Fur Products: Prohibition. 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. Furthermore, state law specifies that products or handicraft items made from fur-bearing mammals or nongame mammals can be purchased or sold at any time. 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.”¹ This bill will also make it unlawful to manufacture a fur product in the state.²

If passed, A.B. 44 would make California the first state in the nation to ban the cruel and unnecessary fur trade in the sale, display, trade, give, donate, distribute, and manufacture of fur within its borders. California voters have repeatedly shown deep concern about the well-being of animals, including animals killed for their fur, and the state has some of the strictest laws and regulations concerning animal welfare. In 1998, California voters banned the use of steel-jawed leghold traps, body-gripping traps and conibear traps for fur production. In 2015, California ended the killing of bobcats for their fur. In recent years, three California cities – West Hollywood, Berkeley, and San Francisco – all passed ordinances banning the sale of fur within city limits, with the city of Los Angeles not far behind. By passing A.B. 44, California will continue to lead the charge against animal cruelty while reinforcing the shift to fur-free products that is already occurring in the fashion industry.

Simply put, the sale of fur products in California is inconsistent with its position as a world leader on

¹ “AB-44 Fur products: prohibition.” *California Legislative Information*, http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB44 . Accessed March 19, 2019.

² *Id.*

animal welfare and environmental issues, as well as its role in fostering innovative technological advancements.

Regarding animal welfare concerns, it is well-accepted that animal cruelty is inherent in the fur trade industry. More than 100 million animals are raised and killed for their fur each year. On these factory fur farms, wild animals spend their entire lives in cramped cages, deprived of the ability to engage in natural behaviors. These animals are then killed in inhumane ways such as crude gassing, anal electrocution, and neck breaking in order to preserve the quality of their pelts. In the wild, animals are usually caught in crippling leg-hold traps and snares for days without food, water, shelter, or the ability to defend themselves against predators. These archaic traps are indiscriminate, often maiming and killing non-target animals, like threatened and endangered species and even pets.

Due to Born Free's extensive knowledge of the fur trade, and the consequences it can create, we respectfully request that the California Assembly Judiciary Committee pass 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie J. Kluck". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Kluck
Campaigns Associate
Born Free USA
Email: julie@bornfreeusa.org
Phone: (202) 450-3168