



Testimony of Mike Brown
Organization: Natural Fibers Alliance
Bill: Senate Bill 832

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 832. The Natural Fibers Alliance is an environmental justice coalition that represents the interests of wool, leather, fur, and other natural animal use materials.

We oppose this bill for several reasons.

First, this bill is unnecessary. Workers at fur farms are considered essential workers and have already begun receiving vaccines. Additionally, vaccines for mink are being rolled out and distributed in the immediate future.

According to public health experts, vaccinations greatly reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. In Israel, for example, 90% of people over the age of 60 have been vaccinated, and cases of the virus [have plunged](#).

Just as vaccines have allowed state officials to loosen COVID restrictions on other businesses, vaccines make this bill moot.

Cases of coronavirus on fur farms in the United States are also far less than what Europe experienced. [Only 19 incidents](#) have occurred on American farms, compared to 317 in Europe. Farms have also increased their biosecurity measures during the pandemic, adding a further layer of protection that will continue into the future.

This bill is based on flawed logic. There have been more outbreaks of coronavirus among cats and dogs - [72](#) - than there have been among mink. Under the logic of this bill, should we not shut down all animal shelters and rescues, too, and ban pet adoptions?

Most people would see that as overkill. The same is true for farms.

I want to emphasize that this bill is not about public health. This legislation is being pushed by animal liberation activists who simply want to shut down the fur industry. They don't think people should be allowed to produce or buy fur - or leather, wool, cashmere, silk, and other animal-derived fibers.

In fact, these activists should take a closer look in the mirror. Their harmful tactics and outright disbelief in the fur industry has dangerous consequences for our environment. It is well documented that synthetic materials used by the "fast fashion" industry is playing a key role in the pollution of our waterways and the overflow of our landfills.

There have also been numerous instances of criminal activists committing economic sabotage against fur farms in the Northwest. Now, like-minded groups are using the legislative process under the guise of public health. These same activists want to shut down every dairy farm, cattle ranch, and wool operation in Washington state. We should not go down this road.

The public policy goal with coronavirus is to allow places to reopen as soon as it is safe to do so. This bill does the opposite. It punishes farmers during a global pandemic, despite them taking responsible precautionary measures.

This is unfair and it is bad policy. I urge the committee to reject this unnecessary legislation.