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October 14, 2022

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui  
Vice Mayor Alanna Mallon  
Honorable Members of the City Council  
City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Via email: [citycouncil@cambridgema.gov](mailto:citycouncil@cambridgema.gov)

**Re: Support for Cambridge Fur Sales Ban, Ordinance #2022-17**

Dear Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Mayor Mallon, and Honorable Council Members:

On behalf of Harvard Law School's Animal Law & Policy Clinic and Animal Law & Policy Program, we write to express our support for banning the sale of fur in Cambridge (Ordinance #2022-17). This ordinance would prevent cruelty to animals and promote environmental wellbeing and public health.

Globally, nearly 100 million minks, foxes, raccoon dogs, rabbits, and other animals are killed each year for their fur. About 85% of these animals are bred and slaughtered on factory fur farms while the remaining 15% are trapped and hunted in the wild. In the U.S., more than 3 million minks were killed on fur farms in 2018—all for gratuitous luxury products and trinkets. When farmed, these animals spend their entire lives confined to cramped, barren wire cages, where they endure fear, stress, disease, and discomfort, often leading to self-mutilation and even cannibalism. Before they are one year old, they are gassed with carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide, anally electrocuted, bludgeoned, or have their necks snapped. Those captured in the wild using leg-hold traps, snares, or drowning traps (all of which are illegal in Massachusetts) often are left for days without shelter, food, or water. In struggling to free themselves, animals may break bones or teeth, or even try to chew off their own limbs.

Mink farming has a substantially higher environmental impact than faux fur or non-fur alternatives, especially as it pertains to the production of greenhouse gas emissions, water depletion, and agricultural land occupation. Fur farms have run afoul of environmental regulations by dumping manure, feed, and carcasses into sensitive wetlands. Farm run-off has seeped into watersheds, leading to the growth of toxic algae in waterways, rendering lakes un-swimmable and causing loss of biodiversity. The loss of biodiversity also can result from trapping wild animals. Because traps are indiscriminate, the American Veterinary Medical Association reports that non-target animals can account for up to 67% of the total catch.

Fur farms also are dangerous reservoirs of zoonotic disease because of the intensive confinement, high levels of stress, and unsanitary conditions at such facilities. In 2020, minks on hundreds of fur factory farms around the world—including in Utah, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Oregon—tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. Genetic analysis has shown that farmed minks have spread the mutated virus to workers—the only known animal-to-human transmission outside the original source. To protect public health, the Spanish, Danish, and Dutch governments have killed nearly 20 million minks at infected farms.

The fur industry also is harmful to human health. Common methods for dressing fur skins involve the application of formaldehyde (linked to leukemia), chromium (linked to cancer), and ammonia to the pelt to prevent biodegradation. The chemicals used to process fur threaten the health of workers in fur processing plants, and harmful levels of toxic chemicals—such as formaldehyde and ethoxylates, which can cause allergies, cancer, and hormonal imbalance—have been found in fur trims on children’s fashion wear sold by such brands as D&G, Woolrich, Canada Goose, and Nickelson.

Eliminating the sale of fur products in Cambridge would reduce demand for the products and raise awareness of the cruelty, environmental, and health consequences arising from the fur trade. We urge you to make Cambridge an even kinder place by voting “yes” on Ordinance #2022-17.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,



Arlene Altagracia Lopez  
Harvard Law School, J.D. Candidate '23  
Animal Law & Policy Clinic



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