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Honorable Senate Members  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
California State Capitol, Room 2206  
Sacramento CA 95814

Re: AB 44 (Fur Products Prohibition Act) – SUPPORT

Dear Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

I am writing to respectfully urge support for AB 44, introduced by Assemblymember Laura Friedman. AB 44 would make it unlawful to sell, give, or manufacture a new fur product in the state. If passed, AB 44 would make California the first state in the nation to ban the cruel and unnecessary fur trade within its borders. Simply put, the sale of fur products in California is inconsistent with its position as a world leader on animal welfare and environmental issues, as well as its role in fostering innovative technological advancements.

Regarding animal welfare, it is well-accepted that animal cruelty is inherent in the fur industry. Each year more than 100 million animals are raised and killed for their fur. Most are raised on fur factory farms where wild animals spend their entire lives in cramped cages, deprived of the ability to engage in natural behaviors, only to be killed in horrific ways at the end. In the wild, animals are often caught in crippling leg-hold traps for days without food or water. These archaic traps are indiscriminate, often maiming and killing non-target animals, like threatened species and even pets.

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, by ballot initiative, 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, four California cities – West Hollywood, Berkeley, San Francisco and Los Angeles – all passed ordinances banning the sale of fur within city limits. By passing AB 44, California will continue to lead the charge against animal cruelty while reinforcing the shift to fur-free products that is occurring in the fashion industry.

The fur industry also poses serious environmental threats. On fur factory farms, waste runoff from animals pollutes the soil and waterways, and the tanning and dying process uses toxic and carcinogenic chemicals, like chromium and formaldehyde, to prevent the skin from decaying. Fortunately, innovative technology has produced an array of alternatives with the same warmth, look and feel as fur but without the cruelty or environmental concerns.

Moreover, consumers' growing concern for animal welfare and environmental degradation caused by the fur industry is leading fashion brands, cities, and countries to move away from animal fur once and for all. In 2018, Chanel, Coach, Burberry, Versace, Donna Karan, Diane Von Furstenberg, and InStyle magazine

joined Gucci, Michael Kors, and Armani by announcing fur-free policies. Internationally, Norway and Belgium joined the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Austria in banning fur production. Also, India banned fur imports in 2017.

By passing AB 44 and eliminating the sale of new fur products in California, we have the opportunity to increase community awareness of animal welfare, mitigate the environmental harm caused by the fur industry, bolster the demand for sustainable and innovative alternatives, and, in turn, foster a more humane environment in California.

For the foregoing reasons, we kindly request that the Senate Appropriations Committee members support the passage of AB 44.

Sincerely,

[your name]

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations