

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

A N A C T

RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW -- GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS --
TRADE IN ANIMAL FUR PRODUCTS ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Serpa, Bennett, Solomon, and Baginski

Date Introduced: February 02, 2024

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 6 of the General Laws entitled “Commercial Law – General Regulatory
2 Provisions” is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 60

4 TRADE IN ANIMAL FUR PRODUCTS ACT

5 **6-60-1. Legislative findings.**

6 The general assembly finds and declares that eliminating the sale of fur products in the
7 State of Rhode Island will decrease demand for cruel products, reduce public health risks, promote
8 community awareness of animal welfare, alleviate environmental burdens and enhance the
9 reputation of the state.

10 **6-60-2. Definitions.**

11 As used in this chapter, the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

12 (1) “Fur” means any animal skin or part thereof with hair, fleece, or fur fibers attached
13 thereto, either in its raw or processed state.

14 (2)(i) “Fur product” means any article of clothing or covering for any part of the body, or
15 any fashion accessory, including, but not limited to, handbags, shoes, slippers, hats, earmuffs,
16 scarves, shawls, gloves, jewelry, key chains, toys or trinkets, and home accessories and décor, that
17 is made in whole or in part of fur.

18 (ii) “Fur product” shall not mean any of the following:

1 (A) Any animal skin or part thereof that is to be converted into leather, or which in
2 processing will have the hair, fleece, or fur fiber completely removed.

3 (B) Cowhide, deerskin, alpaca skin, goatskin or sheepskin with the hair or fleece attached
4 thereto;

5 (C) Animal hair, fleece, or fur fibers that are not attached to skin;

6 (D) A raw or green pelt, or a dried, cured, or tanned pelt that has not been manufactured
7 into and is not sold as an article of clothing, covering for any part of the body, or fashion accessory;
8 or

9 (E) The pelt or skin of any animal that is preserved through taxidermy or for the purpose
10 of taxidermy.

11 (3) “Nonprofit organization” means any corporation that is organized under section
12 501(c)(3) of title 26 of the United States Code that is created for charitable, religious, philanthropic,
13 educational, or similar purposes.

14 (4) “Taxidermy” means the practice of preparing and preserving the skin of an animal that
15 is deceased and stuffing and mounting it in lifelike form.

16 (5) “Ultimate consumer” means a person who buys fur for their own use, or for the use of
17 another, but not for resale or trade.

18 (6) “Used fur product” means a fur product that has been worn or used by an ultimate
19 consumer.

20 **6-60-3. Prohibition.**

21 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, it is unlawful to sell, offer for sale, display for
22 sale, trade, or otherwise distribute for monetary or non-monetary consideration a fur product in the
23 State of Rhode Island. For purposes of this section, the sale of a fur product shall be deemed to
24 occur in Rhode Island if:

25 (1) The buyer takes physical possession of the fur product in Rhode Island; or

26 (2) The seller is located in Rhode Island.

27 **6-60-4. Exemptions.**

28 The prohibition set forth in § 60-6-3 shall not apply to the sale, offer for sale, displaying
29 for sale, trade, or distribution of:

30 (1) A used fur product;

31 (2) A fur product required for use in the practice of a religion;

32 (3) A fur product:

33 (i) The fur of which was obtained from an animal through lawful trapping or hunting; and

34 (ii) When sold, offered for sale, displayed for sale, traded, or distributed in a face to face

1 transaction at a place such as a residence, craft fair, or other location used on a temporary or short-
2 term basis, by the person who trapped or hunted the animal, or by an immediate family member of
3 the person who hunted or trapped the animal; or

4 (4) A fur product that is expressly authorized by federal law.

5 **6-60-5. Civil penalty.**

6 (a) A violation of this chapter shall be a civil infraction. Any person who violates this
7 chapter shall be subject to the following penalties:

8 (1) For a first violation, a civil penalty of up to five hundred dollars (\$500);

9 (2) For a second violation that occurred within one year of a previous civil infraction, a
10 civil penalty of up to seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750);

11 (3) For a third violation that occurred within one year of a second civil infraction, a civil
12 penalty of up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

13 (b) Each fur product that constitutes a violation of this chapter shall be treated as a separate
14 violation in any civil action brought pursuant to this chapter.

15 (c) The attorney general shall enforce the provisions of this chapter.

16 (d) Any municipality may, by ordinance, enforce the provisions of subsections (a)(1)
17 through (a)(3) of this section.

18 **6-60-6. Severability.**

19 If any provision of this chapter or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is
20 held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect any other provision or application which can be given
21 effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this chapter are
22 declared to be severable.

23 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect three (3) years after passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW -- GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS --
TRADE IN ANIMAL FUR PRODUCTS ACT

- 1 This act would prohibit the sale of new fur products and provides graduated civil penalties
- 2 for violations of the act.
- 3 This act would take effect three (3) years after passage.

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