

Ending the fur trade

A guide to ending
fur sales in your city



**Humane
World for
Animals™**

Formerly called the Humane
Society of the United States and
Humane Society International

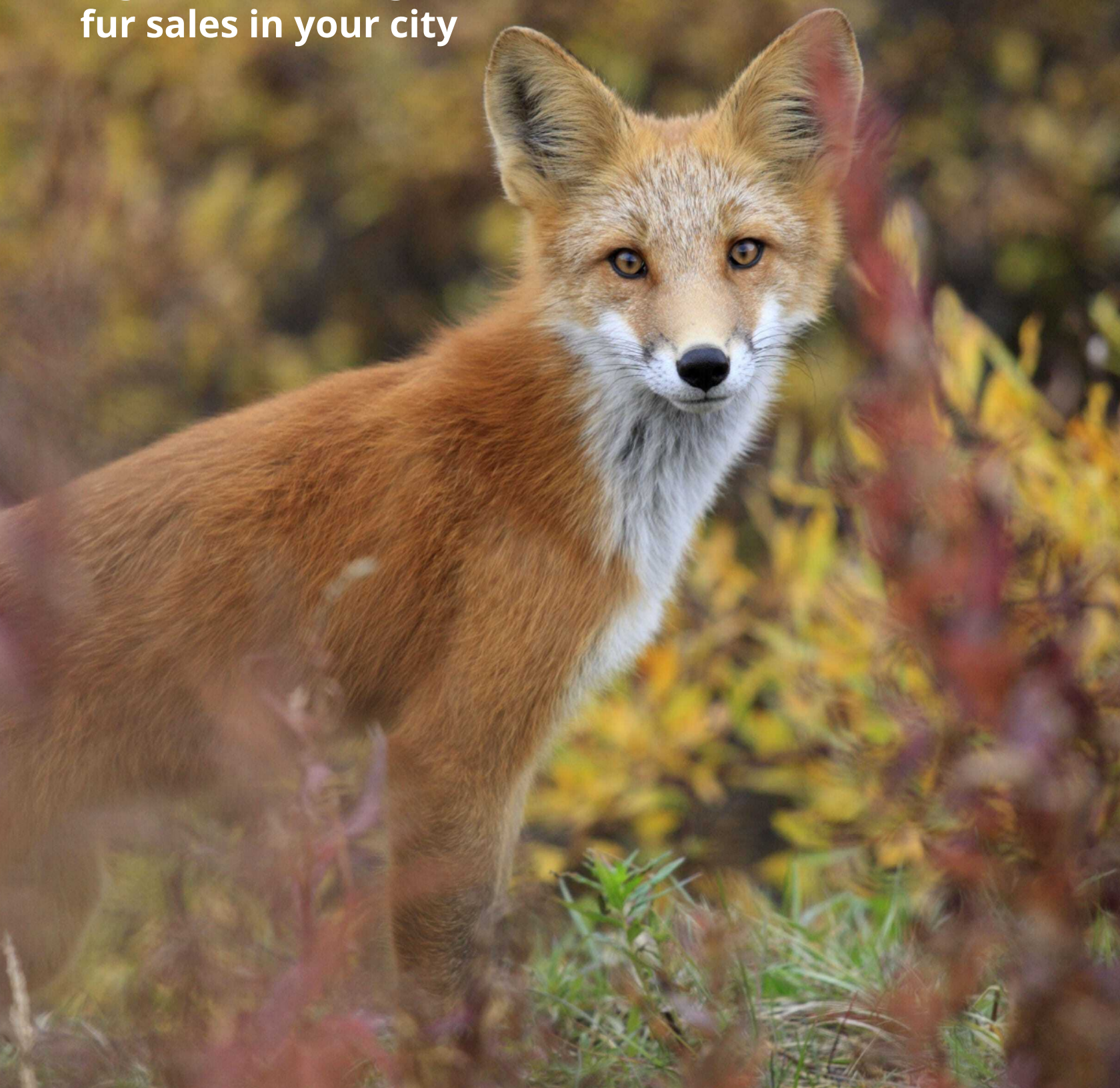


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How to use this guide

Every year, tens of millions of animals -

including mink, raccoon dogs, foxes, rabbits and coyotes - are killed solely for their fur. This guide will provide the tools to help end this cruel industry in your community.

Consumers' growing concern for animal welfare is leading cities and states across the U.S. to ban the sale of animal fur once and for all. In 2019, California became the first state to prohibit the sale of new fur products, after Los Angeles, San Francisco, West Hollywood and Berkeley passed similar ordinances. Humane World for Animals is dedicated to passing more of these sales bans, and your community could be next.

Thankfully, citizens like you can help end the fur trade in your community. Here's how this guide will help you get started.

- **Learn about the issue:** Find out about the fur trade and what's being done to stop the cruel practices of killing animals for their fur.

- **Gather additional information:** This section provides some questions for you to consider regarding the fur trade in your county, city or town.
- **Take action:** Here you'll find an overview of the three main methods for combating the fur trade in your community:
 1. Identify local interests and raise public awareness.
 2. Work with local retailers to announce fur-free policies.
 3. Pass a local ordinance ending new fur sales.
- **Appendices:** You can adapt these sample documents to the issues in your community. We've included sample fact sheets, letters to the editor, op-eds, tweets, Facebook posts, a share graphic, testimony and letters to lawmakers.

For assistance, contact furfree@humaneworld.org.

Learn about the issue

Animal cruelty and fur production

Most fur comes from fur factory farms, where undomesticated animals (such as mink, foxes and raccoon dogs) spend their entire lives in cramped cages, deprived of the ability to engage in natural behaviors only to be crudely gassed, bludgeoned or anally electrocuted at the end of their lives. Animal protection organizations have even documented animals being skinned alive by the fur industry.

Most fur products come from China, where there are no laws protecting animals used for fur. Even in the U.S., no federal laws protect animals on fur farms, and fur-bearing animals are not subject to humane slaughter laws.

In the wild, animals like coyotes, bobcats and lynx are caught in crippling leg-hold traps for days without food or water. These archaic traps are indiscriminate, often maiming and killing non-target animals, including threatened species and pets.

See how fur is produced here (**WARNING: Videos contain disturbing images**):

- [Ohio fur farm rescue \(2025\)](#)
- [China fur farms \(2024\)](#)
- [Romania fur farms \(2022\)](#)
- [Asian fur farms \(2019\)](#)
- [Finnish Fur farms \(2024\)](#) and [\(2018\)](#)

The facts about the fur trade

Fashion companies are saying no to fur.

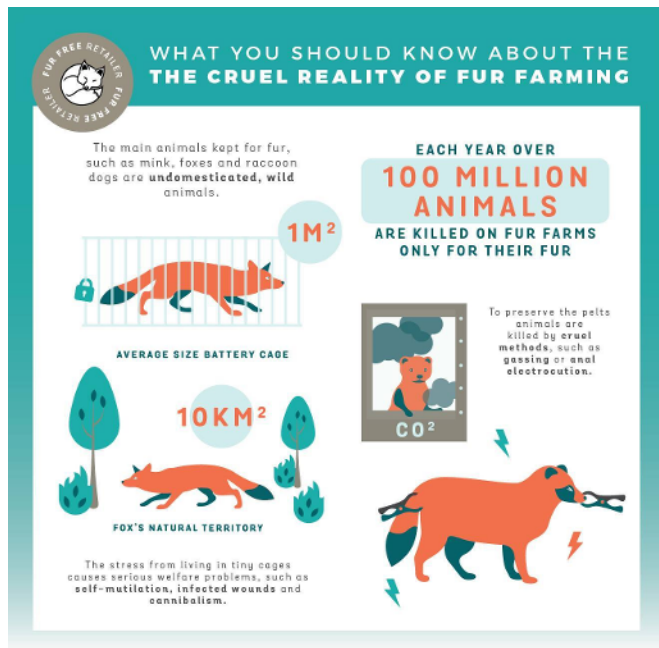
Consumers' growing concern about the cruelty and environmental destruction caused by the fur industry is leading fashion brands to go fur-free. Macy's, , Gucci, Burberry, Chanel, Versace, Armani, T.J. Maxx, Michael Kors and dozens of others have announced fur-free policies, opting instead for alternatives that are warm and fashionable without the cruelty.

Fur-free fashion companies

Fashion shift

More than 1,600 designers and retailers around the world have pledged to go fur-free, including influential fashion houses and major stores. Import and sales bans in the United States, Europe and elsewhere are aimed at reducing demand and, eventually, production.





The fur trade could cause the next pandemic.

In addition to severe animal cruelty issues, keeping animals in filthy conditions at fur factory farms or wildlife markets poses serious risks to public health. China is the world's largest fur producer, and mink, raccoon dogs and foxes are common at wildlife markets. At these markets, animals have tested positive for coronaviruses at the heart of recent pandemics: Foxes and raccoon dogs were found to have been infected with the SARS coronaviruses, and in the Netherlands, Spain and Denmark, mink on fur factory farms tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19. In fact, according to the Dutch government, it is "very likely" that farmed mink spread the virus to humans, which is the only confirmed animal-to-human transmission since the original source. The Dutch, Spanish and Danish governments killed over 1 million mink at infected farms, yet these facilities still remain potential reservoirs for COVID. Now, fur-farmed animals are testing positive for highly contagious avian influenza.

Fur production is an environmental nightmare.

On fur factory farms, waste runoff from animals pollutes the soil and waterways. The tanning and dying process uses toxic chemicals, including chromium and formaldehyde to prevent the skin from decaying. Not surprisingly, truth-in-advertising committees across Europe have ruled that advertising fur as environmentally friendly is "false and misleading." In 2018, the French advertising authority said, "numerous reliable reports show that the production of fur is extremely cruel and polluting, and that the final product contains toxic substances."

Per kilogram, the fur industry has the largest negative environmental impact of any material used for fashion, in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, waste runoff and toxicity.

The water consumption for fur production is extraordinarily high, being 104x more than acrylic, 91x more than polyester, and 5x more than cotton. The climate change impact of mink fur is at least 6x greater than that of faux fur.

Humane alternatives exist.

After going fur-free in 2016, Giorgio Armani said, "technological progress made over the years allows us to have valid alternatives at our disposal that render the use of cruel practices unnecessary as regards animals." Michael Kors went fur-free the following year, saying, "due to technological advances in fabrications, we now have the ability to create a luxe aesthetic using non-animal fur." This sentiment has spread across the fashion industry, as major fashion brands have switched to innovative materials that have the look and feel of animal fur but without the cruelty. Fur sales bans reflect consumer interest in the welfare of animals and eliminate local complicity in cruel production methods. This can help drive innovation for more sustainable and humane alternatives.



Consumers growing concern about the animal cruelty and environmental destruction caused by the fur industry is leading to fur-free policies by some of the biggest names in fashion and bans on fur sales, imports and production by cities, states and countries across the globe. Being educated about the issue and spreading that awareness to others will help create a fur free future and share graphics like the ones above are an effective way to spread the message.



Gather additional information

Reach out to Humane World for Animals

The experts at Humane World for Animals can provide you with information about the fur trade and whether any efforts to end fur sales in your community or state are already underway. Email us at furfree@humaneworld.org.

Know your Opposition

It is essential that you become knowledgeable about the people and entities that will oppose your efforts. You should identify the major players who promote fur sales in your community, like furriers, and understand their potential objections to your proposal. By understanding their arguments, you can present well-thought-out counterarguments. This information will help when you go before your community's decision-making body (e.g., city council or county commission), the media and others to talk about the importance of a fur ban. Make sure you are well-versed on the arguments as to why fur is unnecessary and harmful to animals, the environment and the public, and how it benefits your community to be a humane place to live and do business.

Identify local advocates and organizations that can help the campaign

Developing a broad base of support will greatly increase the chances of ending fur sales in your community. Potential allies may be all around you. Look first in the most likely places: your family, friends and neighbors, as well as animal advocates you know. Many local apparel retailers have strict no-fur policies and can become your allies.

Next, research other groups in your town, city, county and state that may support efforts to ban fur sales. Look for local animal groups, wildlife rehabilitation organizations, wildlife sanctuaries accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries, veterinarians, environmental groups, people who are outspoken on animal issues and other well-known and/or influential individuals.



Take action

The three critical elements for fighting to end fur sales in your community are:

1. Identifying local interest and raising public awareness.

Many people want to promote animal welfare within their communities, including with respect to products sold in local marketplaces. People are typically shocked to learn about the cruelty behind fur production. Public outrage drives change for animals, and you can help spread the word using conventional and social media.

2. Working with local retailers. Stores in your area may already have strict fur-free policies. Other retailers may not know about the cruelty behind the fur trade and might be willing to work with you to announce fur-free policies that can garner goodwill with local consumers and thereby increase business opportunities. These companies should be celebrated and could be allies in the fight to end fur sales.

3. Passing laws that end fur sales. Ultimately, state-level bans on fur sales are the most impactful. But it is often important to establish humane standards at the community level first. California became the first state to ban fur sales, after Los Angeles, San Francisco, West Hollywood and Berkeley passed similar legislation. The more cities and counties that ban fur sales to eliminate local complicity in the cruelty associated with the industry, the more likely state legislators will see that a ban on fur sales is warranted statewide.

Raising public awareness

Most citizens are unaware of how terrible fur is for animals, the environment and public health. Use traditional media, social media and public events to spread the message.

The importance of an “ask”

Whenever you reach out to the public, you should always include an “ask” - a specific action that the public can take. For example, encourage people to ask their city or county councilmembers to introduce or support an ordinance ending fur sales.

Spread the word on social media

Engage your network on social media to help combat fur. Share fur-related news or videos of fur investigations so followers can stay up to date on the issue and better understand the cruelty behind the fur trade. Inform them of important legislative actions and ask them to get involved by submitting letters to the editor and joining your coalition. Social media is a great way to find like-minded individuals who will help you in your mission! Our guide includes a sample share graphic, tweets and Facebook posts. For the latest news about the fur trade, follow us at facebook.com/humaneworldfurfree

Submit letters to the editor of your local paper

Letters to the editor are an important tool for sharing and influencing public opinion. Not only is the opinion page one of the most widely read sections of a newspaper, but lawmakers frequently read it to gauge the interest of their constituents on a variety of matters. The more letters submitted to the same publication that express similar viewpoints, the greater the likelihood that one or more letters will be published, so encourage others to write as well. Editors may also recognize the anti-fur movement as an important issue to readers and decide to cover it themselves.

The average letter to the editor is only five or six sentences, or about 150-250 words - keep it short and direct. Most papers publicize their word count limit in the opinion section. Your main point (i.e., the fur trade is cruel, unnecessary and bad for the environment and/or could cause the next pandemic, and that a fur sales ban will enhance the reputation of the community) should be clearly stated in the beginning of the letter to grab the reader's attention. Timing is also important, so submit your letter prior to key legislative actions or the winter shopping season. This guide contains a few examples of letters to the editor that you can adapt for your needs, and [here](#) are some tips on writing and submitting letters.

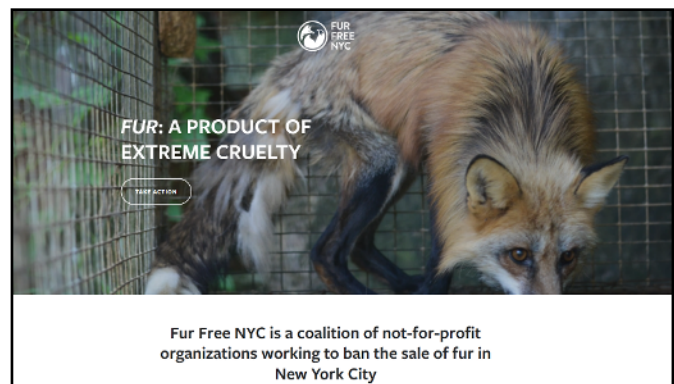
Submit an opinion piece to your local paper

Opinion editorial pieces (commonly known as "op-eds") are similar to letters to the editor but are longer and provide more context regarding a particular issue. While letters to the editor may be around 250 words or fewer, for an op-ed aim for between 500 and 700 words.

Outline your stake in the issue - are you a business owner, veterinarian, wildlife rehabilitator, animal rescue worker or volunteer, scientist, member of academia, hiker, wildlife watcher, or parent, school or community association concerned with animal welfare, the environment or public safety? Say so! Your main point (i.e., the fur trade is cruel and unnecessary, bad for the environment and/or could cause the next pandemic, and that a fur sales ban will enhance the reputation of the community) should be clearly stated at the beginning of the op-ed to grab the reader's attention.

Start a coalition website

Once your coalition starts to grow, you may want to develop a website dedicated to your community's fur sales ban. This is a great way to educate advocates, retailers and local elected officials about the issue and keep everyone informed about upcoming events. Information about the fur trade can be found at humaneworld.org/en/issue/going-fur-free or our Facebook page: facebook.com/humaneworldfurfree.



Coalition websites, like this one from Fur Free NYC (www.furfreenyc.com), can be a great way to bring attention to the issue in your city and can be used as a resource to share with local retailers or elected officials.

Attend a town hall meeting in your community

A good way to raise awareness is to attend a town hall meeting where your elected official(s) will be present. Typically, these meetings include an opportunity to present a public comment or ask a question. This is an ideal opportunity to discuss why fur sales should be prohibited and put the issue right before the decision-makers for comment.

Organize a public education event in your community

Consider hosting a public event to educate fellow citizens and encourage them to take action. Reach out to Humane World for guidance at furfree@humaneworld.org.

Working with local retailers to announce fur-free policies

Support from local retailers can be helpful to show elected officials that the business community is behind legislation banning fur sales. Here are some quick and easy tips on how to reach out to your local apparel retailers about fur.

Ask for a meeting and follow up

Companies that want to align their policies with their customers' values will have an opportunity to transition to cruelty-free alternatives. If a company sells fur, ask them if they'd be open to discussing the issue privately. They may not know the truth about where fur comes from or that their customers would like them to sell more humane and innovative products. You're a potential customer, and companies want to hear from you - be patient and persistent until they have time to speak with you.

If the company is already fur-free, fantastic! Next ask them if they'd be willing to support local legislation banning fur sales by submitting a letter of support, testifying at the next city council meeting or even just sharing their fur-free policy on social media.

Be prepared to make the case that fur is history

This guide provides you with all the necessary information needed to convince a retailer to go fur-free. If you have an opportunity to speak with a retailer that still sells fur, politely explain that consumers are gravitating away from products associated with animal cruelty and that going fur-free can be good for business. This is why so many brands and retailers announced their fur-free policies on social media, those were some of their most-liked posts at the time.

Mention that it's also good business for companies to remain adaptive in the face of change! Cities, states and countries across the globe are moving away from fur by either banning sales or production. This is leading to new business opportunities for innovative materials that are better for animals and the environment.

Celebrate fur-free announcements

When a retailer announces a fur-free policy, it's time to celebrate! Share the news with friends, family and followers on social media, so your community knows to support local fur-free companies. Be sure to keep supportive retailers up to date about local fur sales ban legislation and ask them if they'd be willing to submit a letter of support or speak at a city council meeting.



Celebrating fur-free successes on social media gives fashion companies the positive exposure they deserve and can be an incentive for more brands and retailers to follow suit. In fact, when Gucci and Prada went fur-free, their announcements on social media went viral and garnered tons of praise for the companies.

Passing laws to end the sale of new fur products in your city or county

You can make long-lasting change to eliminate cruelty in the fur trade by passing laws that end fur sales in your city or county. Animals' strongest advocate to influence and change laws is you. As a constituent, you have the most power to influence your local and state officials. You just need patience, commitment and the determination to communicate with those who represent you on the local and/or state level.

Jeremy Hyne/Unsplash

The following information will help get you started on creating policy changes on the state and local level.

Work with your local officials to pass an ordinance in your community

You've already done all your research on the fur trade and local interest in the issue - now put that knowledge into action! Here are some suggested action steps:

Prepare your material

Convert your research into concise fact sheets. You will need a short (no more than one or two pages) fact sheet explaining the problem and why an ordinance is needed. Include general information as well as specific information about fur sales in your city or state. This guide contains a sample fact sheet that you can adapt for your needs.

Learn the process

The process for enacting an ordinance varies around the country, so take the time to become familiar with how things work in your community. Learn about council schedules, whether it must be heard by a specialized committee, and how many public hearings and votes must be held. An official or employee in your local government may be able to help you. Attend a few meetings of the governing body you hope to influence. Listen to the questions they ask and the issues they take most seriously. By understanding their general concerns, you'll be able to craft your arguments accordingly.

Find a friend in office

Public officials take constituents' interests seriously, so try talking to your own council member, county commissioner or alderman first. As much as we would like the people we vote for to agree with us, this may not always be the case. If your own council member is not interested, do not despair. Try to find other officials with an interest in animal issues or those striving to make the city more animal-friendly and pitch your idea to them. Your [Humane World state director](#) may be able to point you toward a sympathetic decision-maker.

Helpful tips for your meetings

- Before any meeting with a lawmaker or agency commissioner, research the person you'll be meeting with as much as you can, develop an agenda and prepare a packet of materials to leave with them. For helpful tips on meeting with your council member, see [here](#).
- Dress professionally and be cordial. Practice your presentation ahead of time. If you do not know the answer to a question, tell the official you will find out and get back to them. Do not be discouraged if the official agrees with only a portion of your proposal.

Additional meeting tips

- Compromise is often necessary in legislative advocacy. Be candid on which entities will likely oppose a ban on fur sales.
- Promptly follow up on your meeting by sending a letter or email thanking the official for their time, briefly restating your position and responding to any unanswered questions that came up during the meeting.
- The current state of fur production is inconsistent with your city's role as a leader in animal welfare and is out of step with the way most Americans believe animals should be treated. Point to examples of when voters have shown deep concern about the well-being and humane treatment of animals, including animals killed for their fur.
- There are no humane sources for fur. Animals held captive on fur factory farms are bred for pelt quality or color, not domestication. In the wild, mink spend most of their time in or near water and foxes roam large areas, live in family groups and dig underground burrows, where they take shelter and care for their young. The inability to exhibit these natural behaviors leads to psychological disorders like self-mutilation and stereotypical pacing.
- The welfare of animals in the fur trade is largely unregulated. China is the world's top producer of fur products and has no laws protecting animals on fur farms. Even in the U.S., there are no federal laws protecting animals on fur farms, and fur-bearing animals are not subject to humane slaughter laws.
- Keeping animals in filthy conditions at fur factory farms or wildlife markets poses serious risks to public health. At wildlife markets in China, foxes and raccoon dogs were found to have been infected with the SARS coronaviruses, and on European fur farms, mink tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19, resulting in the death of more than 1 million mink. Now fur farms are contributing to the spread of avian influenza.
- Animals trapped in the wild for their fur also suffer greatly. They are commonly caught in archaic body-gripping traps (e.g., snares and leghold traps) or body-crushing traps (e.g., conibear traps). These animals often die slowly by drowning, predation, shock, injury or blood loss. If they are found alive and haven't gnawed off their own limb to escape, they are often clubbed or suffocated to death in order to preserve their pelt's value.
- On fur factory farms, waste runoff pollutes soil and waterways. Further, the tanning and dying process uses toxic chemicals such as chromium and formaldehyde, which are harmful to the environment and humans - to prevent skin from decaying.
- Retailers that sell fur can now opt for stylish alternatives that are just as warm but do not involve animal suffering and environmental destruction. Adopting a policy that ensures a humane marketplace can increase business opportunities for local retailers.

Develop a proposed statute or ordinance

You will need proposed draft legislation to present to town, city, county or state officials. To prevent legislation from being overturned in court, it is critical that the language be drafted correctly. Humane World for Animals has significant experience in drafting, lobbying for, and defending animal protection legislation. Please send your proposed legislation to our legislative experts at furfree@humaneworld.org so we can note any potential concerns with the proposed language before it's introduced.

Be sure to include:

- A note that the current state of fur production is inconsistent with your community's role as a leader in animal welfare and is out of step with the way most Americans believe animals should be treated. Point to examples of when voters have shown deep concern about the well-being and humane treatment of animals, including animals killed for their fur.
- Clear definitions of "fur" and "fur product," and what those terms do/do not include.
- A list of narrowly tailored exemptions to the prohibited activities, including activities expressly authorized by federal law.
- The date the legislation goes into effect (generally at least 6 months after enactment).
- Civil penalties.



Provisions to consider when drafting an ordinance:

- Scope of prohibition: It is generally best to keep these measures simple and targeted to preventing the sale of finished fur products.
- Definition of “fur product:” Depending on existing state law and the local political climate, you may want to consider excluding animal skins that are to be converted into leather, cowhide, sheepskin, deerskin and pelts preserved through taxidermy.
- Exemptions: We recommend including a common, reasonable exemption for sale of used fur products.
- Local issues: When drafting a local ordinance, it is imperative to determine: (1) whether the local government has the authority to legislate in this area; and (2) whether any state law allows or prohibits the same activity. A local law cannot prohibit what state law expressly allows, so it is important to become familiar with any state laws that allow the sale of fur from trapped animals, for example. It may be necessary to include an exemption for this type of activity.

Finally, keep in mind that broad bills draw more opposition and potential for legal challenge. Consider the political climate in your community. You may have better success if you limit the scope of the legislation to a simple prohibition on the sale of fur products.

It's easier to make changes to legislation before it's introduced, so again, please email a copy of any draft legislation to us at furfree@humaneworld.org so we can provide guidance.

Build a coalition

Getting a local ordinance enacted takes real effort and requires meeting with council members, testifying at council meetings and garnering support from others for the ordinance. Even in big cities, it's common for very few people to get involved in local government (which means a small group of people are often changing laws and policies). Getting active support from diverse groups in the community can make or break the legislation you are trying to pass.

Some of the people and groups who should be involved in your efforts include:

- Animal advocates
- Wildlife rehabilitators
- Fur-free companies
- Conservation or environmental organizations
- Veterinary professionals
- Animal shelters, rescue groups or other animal welfare organizations

Start reaching out to individuals and groups to garner support. These people can then spread the word among their groups and engage their own media contacts. Let them know about your efforts and ask for letters of support and commitments to meet with their elected officials, attend and/or testify at hearings and conduct outreach to other residents.

Prepare for opposition

While every community is different, the odds are that someone in your area will oppose the ordinance. In advance of a public hearing, it is important to prepare the ordinance's sponsor with information about the opponent's concerns and the data, facts and talking points to address them. Creating a short fact sheet with common FAQs can be very helpful to your sponsor.

Generate support using social media

Much like social media is useful in raising awareness, you can use tools like Facebook, TikTok and Instagram to spread the word, garner support, post alerts and keep followers updated on developments such as upcoming hearings and votes. Alert supporters to hearing dates as soon as they are scheduled so they can save the date. Invite local reporters to follow your coalition page so they can track the progress. Encourage supporters to comment on media stories. The more engagement that reporters see from the community, the more likely they are to continue covering the issue. You can also reach out to legislators by tagging them in posts or commenting on their social media pages to urge their support for pending legislation. Incorporate the use of a hashtag (#) in your postings, for example: [#EndFurSales\[city\]](#) or [#FurFreeFuture](#).

Lobby elected officials

Once a public hearing has been scheduled, make every effort to ensure that you have the votes you need for the ordinance to pass. Ensure that you have met with every council member or commissioner, and that you have shared your information packets and responded to their concerns. Don't be afraid to ask whether you have their vote! Encourage as many residents as possible to write to and call up their legislators. Ask your coalition partners to help publicize the issue and make a call to action through alerts and letters. The key to success is to convince the majority of the council members to vote in your favor.

Attend the public hearing

Once your elected officials call a public meeting to discuss your proposal, you will need to determine who will testify at the hearing and get others to attend. Work closely with the ordinance sponsor on how best to present your case to legislators. The sponsor may recommend limiting the number of speakers.

Plan ahead of time to make sure that everyone does not make the exact same points (a common problem at public hearings). You may only have a small amount of time, so dividing talking points among a handful of speakers can ensure that all your key arguments are heard.

Also, it's helpful to make sure the elected officials can readily identify those in attendance who are in support of the ordinance. Create stickers, buttons or T-shirts with messages that support the ordinance.

Follow-up after the hearing

Oftentimes, an issue is not voted on at the time of a public hearing. During the hearing, take careful notes on who speaks in opposition to the ordinance, what their arguments are and how the elected officials respond to them. Also note what questions the elected officials ask.

This will help you provide information to legislators following the hearing to help alleviate any specific concerns. Check in with the sponsor, or sponsors, of the legislation to debrief about the public hearing and decide what steps to take next.



After the vote

If a vote is taken and you win, celebrate! But bear in mind that the campaign may not yet be over. While careful legislative drafting is key to ensuring that a bill survives any lawsuits, it is important to monitor and consult with experts on any legal challenges in the courts or further action by the legislature. If the ordinance passes, inform relevant lawmakers of the locality's support of the issue.

If you lose, take all you have learned during the campaign and put it to good use when you try again. It can often take several attempts (even years) before a proposed ordinance passes, so do not be discouraged if your first effort fails!

Talk to council members who opposed the bill and discuss what changes could be made to garner support for a future bill. Remember that regardless of the outcome, you educated many people with your message. Public education is critical to the success of any animal welfare campaign and, over time, an educated public can push for positive changes in the lives of animals.

Contact your state legislators

Once major cities in your state start phasing out fur sales, your state could be next. First, get in contact with your Humane World state director by going [here](#) to see if Humane World for Animals is already working with your state legislature. You can also email us at furfree@humaneworld.org.

Next, contact your own state lawmakers by phone, email and postal mail and politely urge them to pass a ban on new fur sales in your state and ask for a meeting. You can find your state legislators and their contact information [here](#). For helpful tips on lobbying, including [calling elected officials](#), go [here](#), and follow the steps outlined above under "*Set up, prepare for and actively participate in meetings with your legislators.*"

Appendices

Ideas to promote your fur-free initiative



Appendix A

Sample fact sheet

Fur-free [city/state]

Support legislation that would make it unlawful to sell new fur products.

The future is fur-free. Consumers' growing concern for animal welfare is leading fashion brands, cities, states and countries to move away from animal fur once and for all. In 2019, California became the first state to phase out the sale of fur products after four of its cities passed ordinances outlawing fur sales. Internationally, dozens of countries, including Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Austria, have phased out fur production. India phased out fur imports in 2017. In 2019, Macy's and Bloomingdale's joined numerous top brands and retailers - including Chanel, Prada, Coach, Burberry, Versace, Donna Karan, Gucci, Michael Kors and Armani - in announcing fur-free policies.

Horrific animal cruelty involved in making fur products. Every year, tens of millions of animals are raised and killed for their fur, solely for fashion. On fur factory farms, undomesticated animals spend their entire lives in cramped cages, deprived of the ability to engage in natural behaviors - only to be crudely gassed or anally electrocuted at the end. The stress from living in a tiny cage causes serious welfare problems, such as self-mutilation and infected wounds. Animal protection organizations have documented animals being skinned alive by the fur industry. In the wild, animals are caught in crippling leg-hold traps for days without food or water. These archaic traps are indiscriminate, often maiming and killing non-target animals, including threatened species and pets.



The fur trade could cause the next pandemic. At wildlife markets in China, foxes and raccoon dogs were found to have been infected with the SARS coronaviruses. On fur farms in Europe, mink tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19, resulting in the death of over 1 million mink. The Dutch government said it is "very likely" that the farmed mink spread the virus to humans. Now, fur farms are contributing to the spread of highly contagious avian influenza.

Fur production causes major pollution. On fur factory farms, waste runoff from animals pollutes the soil and waterways. The tanning and dying process uses toxic chemicals, like chromium and formaldehyde, to prevent the skin from decaying. Not surprisingly, truth-in-advertising committees across Europe have ruled that advertising fur as environmentally friendly is "false and misleading." In 2018, the French advertising authority said, "numerous reliable reports show that the production of fur is extremely cruel and polluting, and that the final product contains toxic substances."

Humane alternatives exist. After going fur-free in 2016, Giorgio Armani said, "technological progress made over the years allows us to have valid alternatives at our disposal that render the use of cruel practices unnecessary as regards animals." Michael Kors went fur-free the following year, saying, "due to technological advances in fabrications, we now have the ability to create a luxe aesthetic using non-animal fur." This sentiment has spread across the fashion industry as major fashion brands have switched to innovative materials that have the look and feel of animal fur but without the cruelty. Legislation like this is leading to a more sustainable and humane future.



Frequently asked questions

What is the purpose of banning fur sales?

- Fur sales bans generally make it unlawful to sell a new fur product, including clothing, accessories and home décor, in the city or state, with reasonable exemptions (such as exemptions for used fur), essentially eliminating local demand for this cruel and unregulated industry. This will increase community awareness of animal welfare and enhance the reputation of the community as a humane place to live and do business, bolster the demand for sustainable and innovative alternatives, and foster a more humane environment.
- The fur trade poses serious risks to public health. At wildlife markets in China, foxes and raccoon dogs were found to have been infected with the SARS coronaviruses, and on European fur farms, mink tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19, resulting in the death of over 1 million mink. The Dutch government said it is “very likely” that the farmed mink spread the virus to humans.
- The fur industry also poses serious environmental threats. On fur farms, waste runoff from animals pollutes the soil and waterways. The tanning and dying process uses toxic and carcinogenic chemicals, like chromium and formaldehyde, to prevent the skin from decaying.
- Consumers’ growing concern about the cruelty and environmental degradation caused by the fur industry is leading fashion brands to move away from animal fur once and for all. InStyle magazine, Stella McCartney, DVF-Diane von Furstenberg, 3.1 Phillip Lim, HUGO BOSS, Patagonia, H&M, GAP, J.Crew, Madewell, and Inditex/Zara (the world’s largest apparel retailer) have publicly supported fur sales bans, and numerous other top brands and retailers - including Macy’s, Bloomingdale’s, Gucci, Prada, Burberry, Chanel, Versace, Armani, T.J. Maxx, Net-a-Porter, Farfetch, Michael Kors and so many others - have announced fur-free policies, opting instead for alternatives that are warm and fashionable without the cruel consequences.

Why do we need laws to ban fur sales?

- Tens of millions of animals are killed annually for their fur. The vast majority of fur is not a byproduct of the meat industry; instead, it comes from animals who are bred and confined specifically for their fur to be used in fashion. Additionally, these undomesticated animals are forced to live in cramped, wire bottom cages and are deprived of the ability to engage in natural behaviors.
- Egregious animal cruelty is the norm in the fur industry. Animals are killed in inhumane ways, such as crude gassing or anal electrocution. In the wild, archaic and indiscriminate traps often maim or kill non-target animals, even endangered species and family pets.
- No federal laws or animal welfare standards protect animals on fur farms, leading to immense suffering.
- Banning fur sales eliminates the demand for cruel products and ensures that humane-minded consumers can shop with confidence.

What laws regulate production or sale of fur?

- In 2019, California became the first state to ban fur sales following similar legislation by Los Angeles, San Francisco, Berkeley and West Hollywood. Numerous other localities across the U.S. have based fur sales bans.
- The welfare of animals in the fur trade is largely unregulated, with the majority of fur products coming from China. In the U.S., there are no federal laws protecting animals on fur farms, and fur-bearing animals are not subject to humane slaughter laws.
- At the federal level, it is illegal to import/export any dog or cat fur product to or from the U.S., and it is illegal to mislabel or falsely advertise the species or the country of origin of a fur product for sale.
- Internationally, Israel was the first country to ban the sale of fur and over 20 countries - including Norway (once the top producer of fur in the world), Belgium, the UK and the Netherlands - have banned fur farming.

What about claims by the fur industry that "humane" regulations exist?

- The fur industry has long tried to brand fur products as "humane" by creating its own self-funded certification programs. Contrary to claims, numerous investigations have shown that "certified" farms do not mean better animal welfare.
- In fact, several top fashion brands that sold fur reviewed these certification schemes and still chose to go fur-free since they fail to address the serious animal welfare problems inherent with trapping or confining an undomesticated animal in a small, barren cage for his or her entire life.
- Many European countries - including the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and Austria - have banned fur farming based in part on the understanding that it is impossible to raise fur-bearing animals in captive conditions that ensure high standards of welfare while remaining financially viable.
- When consumers and fashion companies look into fur production - every disingenuous marketing scheme, every vague claim, every certification program - they quickly realize that there is no way to humanely source fur.

How will fur sales bans affect local retailers?

- Banning fur sales creates a humane place to live and do business while also enhancing the reputation of the community and increasing business opportunities as a result of ensuring a humane marketplace

- Businesses will have time to sell off any remaining fur inventory and to modify or diversify their business practices. Retailers can and will transition to innovative, animal-friendly alternatives that are better for the environment and animals.
- The fur industry has been plagued by animal cruelty concerns for decades, and consumers increasingly want products that don't involve abuse. Fur-free marketplaces attract these consumers to businesses operating in those marketplaces.
- As more brands and retailers go fur-free, more countries ban fur production, and more cities and states phase out fur sales, there is a great opportunity for companies to enhance their reputation by transitioning to humane products.
- The apparel industry is rapidly moving toward more humane and sustainable products. Popular faux fur company House of Fluff was founded by the former creative director of the furrier J. Mendel. The company uses the same techniques it used with animal fur but now with faux fur and with a greater focus on sustainability. Ecopel, a leader in faux fur, has introduced faux fur made from recycled plastics collected from the oceans, and the Faux Fur Institute has created faux fur alternatives made from plant-based and recycled materials.
- Workers in the fur industry possess transferrable skills, such as hand sewing or pattern making, which are still needed in the manufacturing of faux furs and a variety of other fabrics.



Appendix B

Sample letters to the editor

These samples can be used for inspiration, but do not copy and submit these samples verbatim as newspapers prefer to print letters that are unique submissions to their publication. To have the most impact, be sure to include additional details with specifics about the fur trade in your city or state.

Sample Letter 1:

Dear editor:

Ending fur sales is a modest and much needed step towards improving the lives of animals that all too often are commodified and abused for the sake of profits. This important legislation will institute a prohibition on the sale of new fur products in **[City/State]**. The people of **[City/State]** care about animal welfare and want to promote a culture that embraces kindness towards animals.

As public consciousness around the sentience of animals has risen, interest in the most inhumane of animal products has waned. Fur farming - the raising of fur bearing species in confinement solely for fashion - is inhumane and wholly unnecessary to keep us warm through even the harshest of winters. By passing a prohibition on fur sales, **[City/State]** will embrace a sensible approach to consumers saying once and for all that no animal must die for a fur fashion statement.

Sample letter 2:

Dear editor:

I was shocked and outraged to learn about the animal abuse that happens in the fur industry. The majority of fur products come from factory farms, where undomesticated animals are locked in small, filthy cages and denied the ability to swim, burrow or do anything that may come natural to them. These animals are then killed in cruel ways, such as gassing or anal electrocution. The number of animals killed for their fur is nothing short of overwhelming: 100 million per year, including foxes, mink, coyotes and chinchillas. If rabbits are included, that number is estimated to be over a billion. Yet this cruelty is unnecessary, given that nobody needs to wear a fur coat, especially given the vast array of stylish and warm alternatives.

Thankfully, **[City/State]** residents are able to get involved in the fight to end our contribution to this inhumane industry. A prohibition on the sale of new fur products in **[City/State]**, is currently in front of the **[City Council/Legislature]**.

I ask that they please support this commonsense measure that would promote a more humane community.

[City/State] residents are compassionate and care about animals. When people find out the truth behind the fur industry, they know our community must go fur-free. I urge you to please support this legislation!

Sample letter 3:

Dear editor:

As a passionate animal lover, I'm writing to express my enthusiastic support for the prohibition on new fur sales, which is currently being considered in **[City/State]**. This law would phase out the sale of new fur products within **[City/State]**. Fur production is invariably cruel, with undomesticated animals like foxes and mink being kept in barren wire cages so small they can barely move around. After spending months in this cruel confinement, fur animals are electrocuted, gassed, have their necks broken, or are even skinned alive just to satisfy a demand for so-called "fashionable" products.

I like fashion as much as anybody, but I have no desire to wear something borne out of cruelty toward animals, and I think most people would agree with me. Indeed, as the brutal facts of the industry become more well-known, more and more individuals are joining the anti-fur movement. Thanks to consumer pressure, well-known players in the fashion industry such as Macy's, Gucci, Michael Kors and many others have eliminated fur from their product lines.

Unfortunately, despite these advances, the fur industry remains a billion-dollar industry supported by sales of fur products within our **[City/State]**. Please, if you oppose animal cruelty, take a moment to contact your **[Council Member/Representative]** and ask him or her to vote in favor of prohibiting new fur sales.



Appendix C

Sample Opinion piece (op-ed)

Again, these samples can be used for inspiration, but do not copy and submit these samples verbatim as newspapers prefer to print op-eds that are unique submissions to their publication. To have the most impact, be sure to include additional details with specifics about the fur trade in your city or state.

[City/State] has the chance to lead the charge against animal cruelty and toward a fur-free future.

After investigations from around the world showed appalling cruelty in the fur industry - including animals being skinned alive - West Hollywood became the first city to ban fur sales in 2013. Berkeley followed suit in 2017, and San Francisco and Los Angeles did the same in 2018. In 2019, California became the first state in the nation to ban the sale of new animal fur products.

Now **[City/State]** has the opportunity to prohibit new animal fur products because innovative alternatives allow us to have the look and feel of fur without the cruelty.

The fur industry raises and kills more than 100 million wild animals every year in factory farm-like operations where mink, rabbits, foxes and raccoon dogs live in tiny barren cages, unable to exhibit important natural behaviors like burrowing, swimming or running. The pain and stress this leads to self-mutilation, illness, and deformities. The animals often literally go insane. Animals on fur factory farms are typically killed by anal electrocution or crude gassing techniques.

The fur industry has far-reaching environmental implications as well. Waste runoff from fur factory farms seeps into rivers and lakes. To stop the animals' rotting skin from decomposing, fur pelts are treated with toxic, carcinogenic chemicals. In 2018, the French advertising authority said, "numerous reliable reports show that the production of fur is extremely cruel and polluting, and that the final product contains toxic substances." Not to mention, the archaic traps used to catch animals in the wild commonly kill threatened or endangered species - and even our pets.

And now the fur trade has been linked to the spread of the coronavirus and avian influenza. Multiple mink fur farms in the Netherlands, Spain and Denmark have become infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, and it's "very likely" two fur farm workers have contracted COVID-19 from the mink. Even if infection rates decline in humans, experts believe these fur farms could still act as a reservoir for the disease.

All this despite the fact that warm, soft, luxurious alternatives are already embraced by the fashion industry and consumers alike.

India banned fur imports in 2017, and countries like Norway (once the top producer of fur in the world), Belgium, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands have already banned fur production. However, the main proponent of the push against the fur trade is the business sector. Numerous other brands and retailers - including Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Gucci, Burberry, Chanel, Versace, Armani, St. John Knits, Net-a-Porter, Farfetch, Michael Kors and so many others - have announced fur-free policies, opting instead for alternatives that are at least as warm and fashionable as fur, without the harmful consequences

The fur industry's days are clearly numbered. Today's consumers, along with the next generation of consumers, are making it clear that this sort of cruelty is no longer acceptable.

By prohibiting fur sales, **[City/State]** will have an opportunity to capitalize on this trend. The law would enhance the reputation of our community and ensure a humane local marketplace that is aligned with consumer preference. The demand for innovative and sustainable materials will continue to grow, and our drive for technological progress will lead to new materials that are better for the environment and animals.



Appendix D

Sample Social Media

Sample Facebook posts

- The fur industry is cruel and outdated. Please let **[State Legislator/Official]** know that you support a prohibition on new fur sales in **[City/State]**.
- **[City/County Council]** is considering an ordinance to phase out new fur sales in **[City/County]**. This cruel activity has no place in modern society, and especially not in our community. Please urge your councilmember to vote YES on **[Ordinance]**.

Sample Tweets

- Modern society does not tolerate the cruel and unnecessary fur trade. Pass **[Ordinance #]**. #FurFree[City]
- The fur trade is cruel, bad for the environment and could cause the next pandemic. Support **[Ordinance #]**. #FurFreeFuture

Sample graphics to go along with social media:



Appendix E

Sample letter to policymakers

Dear **[Legislator, Commissioner, or Council Member]**:

As a resident of **[City/State]** and your constituent, I respectfully ask that you support **[Ordinance]**, which will phase out new fur sales in **[City/State]** with reasonable exemptions including for leather, shearling and used fur. Innovative technology has produced an array of alternatives with the same warmth, look and feel as fur but without the cruelty or environmental concerns. Continuing to allow this activity does not align with the values of this community.

In the interest of creating a more humane community, I ask that you vote yes for **[ORDINANCE]**. Your support will send a powerful message that **[CITY/STATE]** cares about animal welfare and wants to foster a more humane environment.

Thank you for your consideration.



Appendix F

Sample testimony

Commission and council meetings often have a time limit of about three minutes for oral testimony, so please keep your remarks brief and concise. You can also coordinate with other advocates to ensure that you don't duplicate each other's testimony; instead, each person should focus on a specific topic. For example, one person can talk about how fur is cruel to animals, another can focus on the environmental impact of fur, and another can focus on how innovative alternatives are just as warm and stylish.

Testimony in support of an ordinance ending fur sales

Good morning, members of the committee. My name is **[Name]**. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

I respectfully urge you to support **[Ordinance]** to end new fur sales in **[City/State]**, which will help eliminate the demand for cruel products in our community and ensure that humane-conscious consumers can shop with confidence.

Simply put, there is no way to humanely source fur. This is why so many brands and retailers - including Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Gucci, Michael Kors, Armani, TJ Maxx, and Prada - have announced fur-free policies.

On fur factory farms, undomesticated animals are forced to live in cramped, wire bottom cages for their entire lives, deprived of the ability to engage in natural behaviors like swimming or digging. This torment and psychological trauma leads to stereotypical pacing and self-mutilation. And it's standard for animals to be killed by anal electrocution.

The fur trade is a public health risk. At wildlife markets in China, foxes and raccoon dogs were found to have been infected with the SARS coronaviruses, and on fur farms in Europe, mink tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19. Now, fur farms are contributing to the spread of avian influenza.

The fur industry is also an environmental nightmare. Not only does the tanning and dying process use toxic chemicals like formaldehyde and chromium to prevent skin decay, but the runoff from animals on fur factory farms pollutes waterways and soil.

Consumers care about animal welfare, public health and the environment more than ever, and so many top brands and designers are innovating new fur-free products to keep up with that demand.

Legislation like **[Ordinance]** would enhance the reputation of our community and increase business opportunities for a more humane marketplace.

With this in mind, I ask that you vote yes for **[Ordinance]**. Thank you.

About us

Together, we tackle the root causes of animal cruelty to create permanent change.

With millions of supporters and work happening in over 50 countries, Humane World for Animals—formerly called the Humane Society of the United States—addresses the most deeply entrenched forms of animal cruelty and suffering. As the leading voice in the animal protection space, we work to end the cruelest practices, care for animals in crisis and build a stronger animal protection movement.

Driving toward the greatest global impact, we aim to achieve the vision behind our name: a more humane world for animals.

humaneworld.org



**Humane
World for
Animals™**