

Animal Cruelty Fueling Push To Ban Fur Sales In Mass.

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By Michael P. Norton, State House News Service



Fur coats and hats are displayed in the window of a fur store in the fur district in Manhattan on March 29, 2019. (Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

Massachusetts would become the first state on the East Coast to outlaw the sale of fur products, under legislation introduced Wednesday.

Rep. Jack Patrick Lewis (D-Framingham) and Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield) are sponsoring the bills (SD 1029 and HD 1592), which have the backing of

the Humane Society of the United States. The bill's supporters cite cruel, unregulated animal killing methods in the fur industry.

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"Massachusetts is a world leader in animal welfare," Lewis said. "Given the overwhelming evidence of inhumane practices in the fur industry, the risks fur production has to our public health and the availability of so many different options for warm and fashionable fabrics, we will not continue to be complicit in unnecessary cruelty."

The bill exempts leather, cowhide, and shearling, as well as previously owned fur products, and the ban would apply only to the sale of products including clothing and fashion accessories like handbags, shoes, slippers, hats or key chains, that contain fur.

"The excruciating process these animals go through for their fur is utterly disturbing and must be ended. Due to the work of so many great advocacy organizations, more and more people have begun to learn of this cruel practice and what it entails," Velis said. "Public sentiment against the fur industry has been growing for years, and this bill is an important next step for Massachusetts."

Laura Hagen, Massachusetts state director for the Humane Society, said "the fur industry's days are clearly numbered," mentioning places like Wellesley and Los Angeles that have banned fur sales, major brands dropping fur, and top fur-producing countries like Norway and the Netherlands outlawing fur farming.

The MSPCA, Animal Legal Defense Fund and Fur Free Massachusetts are also supporting the bills, along with Reps. Natalie Higgins and Lindsay

Sabadosa.

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