



CHAMBER  
of  
COMMERCE

**Via Email Only**

March 19, 2019

Honorable Mark Stone, Chair  
Assembly Judiciary Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 104  
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Opposition to AB 44 (Friedman)

Dear Chair Stone and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce strongly opposes AB 44 which would ban the manufacture and sale of most fur products in California.

As the principal advocate for the business community in Beverly Hills, we represent retailers who sell millions of dollars of fur products every year to tourists and locals alike. We have reached out to the business community and heard overwhelmingly how much negative impact a ban on fur will have upon our City and region. The City of Beverly Hills is famous around the world for its diverse and comprehensive luxury retail offerings and the prohibition of these products would place our City – and our state – at a great competitive disadvantage with other states where there is no such prohibition. Banning the sale of fur products will result in a loss in sales and tax revenue for our state and cause a spillover effect resulting in the loss of sales of other goods. Globally, the fur business is valued at more than \$40 billion – this filters down locally to a vibrant economy and jobs. An outright ban would put people with legitimate businesses out of jobs.

We add that, contrary to popular and unverified claims, fur is a regulated industry with multiple laws and industry groups that promulgate standards regarding the appropriate use and manufacture of fur. Yet an outright ban will do nothing to improve conditions, and may instead encourage a black, unregulated market that will worsen conditions for animals.

Beyond this, we believe there is no justification for an outright ban. Fur products have been used for thousands of years and are biodegradable. A switch to “faux” fur and other synthetic, non-bio degradable products would be harmful to the environment, undercutting the very goals of progressive leaders in this state.

Finally, we are concerned about the worrying precedent this bill may set with regard to bans on other animal use products. What is the basis for banning fur but not leather, wool or meat? Where will we be when clothing stores cannot sell any such products – or when all restaurants in California are forced to drop chicken, beef and other animals from their menus? We fail to see the case for banning the sale of these products upon which our state not only relies, but is dependent for a strong economy. To ban these uses will knock out the “legs” of our economy.

In summary, we are very concerned about the impact of a ban on our businesses and believes it sends the wrong message. We urge you to oppose this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Todd Johnson  
President and CEO  
Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce