

British Columbia's Action to Shut Down Dangerous Mink Farms Applauded by Animal Wellness Groups

WASHINGTON, DC, USA , November 5, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Animal Wellness Action, the Center for a Humane Economy, and the Animal Wellness Foundation applaud the announcement by the provincial government of British Columbia that it would bring mink farming to an end by 2025. This represents the first action by a North American governmental entity to address the public health threat posed by mink farms by sunseting the entire industry.



Mink Farms Incubate Cruelty and COVID-19

"British Columbia did the right thing for public health and animal welfare by taking decisive action to end mink farming," said Scott Beckstead, director of campaigns for Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy. "The province's decision sets an example to spur the United States into action by passing the MINKS Act (H.R. 4310), a bill currently pending in the U.S. House, that would similarly bring mink farming in the U.S. to an end."

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Introduced in Congress by Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., Chair of the House Appropriations Committee and Chair of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee, the MINKS Act has since its introduction gained additional sponsors from both parties.

In response to at least three Covid-19 outbreaks on British

Columbia mink farms, the province's Minister of Agriculture Lana Popham announced that the province of British Columbia will be phasing out mink farming with an absolute closure of all operations and pelt sales by 2025. In her announcement, Popham noted, "This decision follows

the recommendations of public health officials and infectious disease experts about managing the threat of the virus for workers at the farms and the broader public.”

Other nations took similar action following outbreaks. Denmark, the world leader in mink pelt production, ordered the culling of over 17 million mink and the shuttering of over a thousand farms after Danish scientists discovered that farmed mink are capable of catching the virus from humans, then transmitting it back to humans in variant form that could resist vaccines or antibodies. Other nations, including The Netherlands, Poland, Lithuania, and Sweden, have also ended their mink farm industries following outbreaks of the disease.

Thus far, US authorities have largely helped protect the dwindling fur industry, rather than protect public health. When Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy contacted authorities at the Center for Disease Control and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as the governors of the leading mink-producing states, to recommend action to end mink farming, they were met with bland statements and a glaring lack of action.

State agriculture agencies likewise have largely ignored calls for ending the mink farm industry, instead relying on mink vaccines to address the public health threat – a measure that could actually cause more problems than it solves, according to Dr. Jim Keen, director of veterinary science for Animal Wellness Action. “We know that this innovative pathogen finds ways around immunological prophylaxes,” he said. “The mink vaccines could actually make matters worse by prompting the virus to mutate into a variant that defies the vaccine and is then transmissible back to humans, perhaps in an even more dangerous form.”

Animal Wellness Action (AWA) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies, and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that’s why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don’t. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Animal Wellness Foundation (AWF) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization



with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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