

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND  
BUSINESS LICENSING

----- X

May 15, 2019  
Start: 1:12 p.m.  
Recess: 8:27 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E:

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Margaret S. Chin  
Keith Powers  
Peter Koo  
Karen Koslowitz  
Brad Lander  
Justin Brannan  
Ydanis Rodriguez  
Helen Rosenthal  
Francisco Cabrera

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Joshua Catcher, Fashion Designer, Author,  
Educator  
Parsons

Eileen Jefferson, Veterinarian &  
New York State Representative  
Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association

Allie Feldman-Taylor, President and Founder  
Voters for Animal Rights

Stephen Humphries, Attorney  
Kelly, Dreyer, and Morin

Mark Oten, Chief Executive  
International Fur Federation

Betele Stern (sp?), Attorney  
Kelly, Dryer, and Morin

Clayton Bexstead (sp?), Mink rancher

Christine Kim, Senior Community Liaison  
Mayor's Community Affairs Unit

Lindsay Greene, Senior Advisor to the Deputy  
Mayor for Housing and Economic Development

Casey Adams, Director of City Legislative  
Affairs  
Department of Consumer Affairs

Dan Matthews, Senior Vice President  
PETA

Cathy Nazari (sp?), Board Member  
Voters for Animal Rights

Priscilla Ferrell, President  
Friends of Animals

Tom Garcia, Senior Vice President & General  
Counsel and Compliance Officer  
Decker Brands

Ted Potrikus, President & CEO  
Retail Council of New York State

Rodney King, New York Resident

Mark Bauer, Fashion Designer

Cynthia King, Business Owner  
Hip Hop is Green

Stewart Mitchell, New York Resident

Justin Siller, Co-owner  
Staten Island Furrier

Frank Siller, Co-owner  
Staten Island Furrier

John Georgiades  
Stallion INC.

Alisha George  
Stallion INC.

Sugan Augarwal (sp?), New York Business Owner

Edita Birnkrant, Executive Director  
NYCLASS

Anna Tagliabue, Founder  
Pelush Faux Furs

Michelle Villa Gomez, Legislative Senior  
Director  
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty  
to Animals, ASPCA

Brian Shapiro, New York State Directory

Humane Society of the United States

Kristen Kern  
American Apparel and Footwear Association

Norman Ambrose, Small business owner  
New York City

Robert Cahill, Senior Vice President  
North American Fur Auctions

Reverend Doctor Johnnie Green,  
Senior Pastor  
Mount Neboh Baptist Church  
Co-founder  
Mobilizing Pastor and Communities, MPAC

John Bartlett, New York Resident

Andrew Kaplan, Veterinarian

Ashley Burn, Associate Director  
PETA

Gia Poli (sp?), New York Resident

Desmond Catagan (sp?), New York Resident

Thomas Cohen, Elected Official  
Long Island

Steve Cowit, Co-owner  
Henry Cowit

Nadin Waheed (sp?), Owner  
Daniel's Leather

Luis Ressi (sp?), Worker  
Daniel's Leather

Leonard Khan, Retired Furrier

Angelina Poli (sp?), New York Resident

Leanne Mai-ly Hilgant (sp?), Founder  
Vaute

Sharon Discorfanio, Member  
New York State Bar  
Member, New York State Bar Association  
Committee on Animal Law

Michelle Cubrerro, New York Resident

Alexandros Palatitas (sp?), New York Resident

Norma McDonald, North American Sales Manager  
OWS

Ariel Collis, Economist  
Capital Trade Inc.

Nicholas Seekas, Owner of small fur business

Vincent Cerisi, General Council  
Echo Design Group

Nora Constance Marion, President  
Animal Cruelty Exposure Fund

Katerina Trabaso (sp?), Professor  
St. John University

Paula Gavino, Canine Behaviorist

Arnold Brunois (sp?)  
Echopel (sp?)

Unidentified, New York Resident

John Patcanis, New York Business Owner

Tina Stova (sp?), Head Veterinary Diagnostic

Department  
Copenhagen Fur, Denmark

Leanne Barnes, Handbag & Accessory Designer

Nina Jackel, Founder  
Lady Freethinker

Roberto Burnelli  
The Animal's Battalion

Jill Carnegie, Local business owner  
NUMU Vegan

Paloma Iglesias, New York Resident

Linda Man, New York Resident

Karen Giberson, President  
Accessories Council

Victoria Suporas (sp?), Fur Business Owner

Harriet Nathan, New York Resident

Arthur Goldstein, Representative  
Accessories Council

James Scotto, New York Resident

Erica Shinar, New York Resident

Nicole Fischelis, New York Resident  
Fashion Industry Professional

Vanessa Soldano, New York Resident

Jen Othanos, Works in Fur Industry

Peter Revasis (sp?), Works in Fur Industry

Peter Liacos (sp?), Works in Fur Industry

Gary Zeltser (sp?), New York Resident

Mark Goodman, New York Resident

Kirk Miller, New York Resident

Christina Detmer, New York Resident

Maureen Median, New York Resident

Christin Lu, New York Resident

Heather Greenhouse, Board member  
Voters for Animals Rights

Ryan Holt, Representative of Fur Industry

Rockwell Schwartz, New York Resident

Meredith Shriver, New York Resident

Nathan Semel, New York Resident

Mitchell Adelman, Global Vice President  
Dennis Basso and J. Mendel

Stephen Lacacis (sp?), worker  
American Fur Center

Unidentified, New York Resident

Ramon Contreras, Co-founder  
Youth Over Guns

Laura Taylor, Instructor  
Suni Fashion Business & PhD Student

Richard Tax, New York Resident

Nicole Damon, New York Resident

Prateksha Patel (sp?), New York Resident & Vet

Blair Marshal, New York Resident

Stephen Walsh, New York Resident

Sherrie Ramsey, Policy Advisor  
Voters for Animal Rights

Rachel Edgemont, New York Resident

Unidentified, New York Resident

Aleena Goikman, Ivel (sp?) International

Eddie Wan, Works in Fur Industry

Jill Laurie, Clinical Social Worker

Catherin Casey, New York Resident

Joyce Friedman, Board member  
Voters for Animal Rights

Rebecca Milvich, Accessories Designer

Unidentified, New York Resident

Lehe Silva, Works in Fur Industry

Jabari Brisport, Board member  
Voters for Animal Rights

Donnie Moss, New York Resident

Lula Columbus, New York Resident

Michael Dawling, New York Resident

John, New York Resident

Cindy Kaplan, New York Resident

Greg McGonagall, New York Resident

Denise Walsh, New York City Resident

Marilyn Zucker, New York City Resident

Felicia Greenfield, New York City Resident

Elizabeth Ardubay, Representative  
Total Liberation New York

Shelby Harvey, New York City Resident

Desiree Matos, President  
Keeping Warm Dog Houses

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

10

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a test. This I  
3 s a test on the Committee on Consumers Affairs and  
4 Business Licensing on May 15th of 2019 by Stephen  
5 Sudowski (sp?).

6 [background comments]

7 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Good afternoon.  
8 Good afternoon. My name is Rafael Espinal and I am  
9 the Chair of the Committee of Consumer Affairs and  
10 Business Licensing. Thank you all for attending  
11 today's hearing on intro 1476 A which bans the sale  
12 of for apparel in New York City. I would like to  
13 acknowledge my colleagues. We have, of course, the  
14 City Council Speaker, Corey Johnson, and the sponsor  
15 of the bill. We also have Council member Ydanis  
16 Rodriguez, Council member Helen Rosenthal, and  
17 Council member Francisco Cabrera all with us today.  
18 With that said, I would like to turn to the speaker  
19 to give a few opening remarks on his bill.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair  
21 Espinal. No. No. No. No clapping here today.  
22 Thank you. Good afternoon. Millions of animals are  
23 killed every year for their fur. It could take  
24 hundreds of lives to make a single coat. While New  
25 York is the fashion capital of the world, we are

2 behind the times when it comes to this issue. Other  
3 major US cities in over 20 countries around the world  
4 have burned-- have banned fur farming or the import  
5 and sale of animals for products. Stella McCartney  
6 famously said for is the most unnecessary thing in  
7 the world. And she is not alone in her beliefs.  
8 Donna Karen, Michael Coors, Diane von Furstenberg,  
9 Tommy Hilfiger, Gucci, Burberry, Chanel, Armani,  
10 Furla, Philip Lim, Vivian Westwood, and the list goes  
11 on, as all taken steps to eliminate for an Institute  
12 for free policies. This bill that we are hearing  
13 today will ban the sale of new firm products with the  
14 five boroughs and prevent the unnecessary slaughter  
15 of animals going forward. This bill will not prevent  
16 the selling or repurposed scene of used for garments  
17 or anyone from wearing or owning fur in New York  
18 City. We are not about to raid your closet. Today,  
19 I think it is important to talk about the real truth  
20 behind the so-called glitz and glamour of the fur  
21 industry. Despite their claims of the contrary,  
22 there is no such thing, and my estimation, is ethical  
23 fur. Or ecological fur. Or excellent welfare fur.  
24 That is marketing language aimed at hiding the  
25 brutality of this business. In fact, those claims

2 are so misleading that advertisements making them  
3 have been banned in other countries. The industry  
4 would have us all ignore the well-documented local  
5 ecological destruction and farther reaching  
6 environmental harms of fur farming and the hazards of  
7 carcinogenic chemicals. Meanwhile, the evidence of  
8 cruelty in the fur industry is overwhelming and  
9 irrefutable. Animals like mink, foxes, raccoons,  
10 chinchillas, rabbits, even dogs and cats in some  
11 countries are forced to live their entire lives and  
12 conditions no one of conscience could ever condone.  
13 These animals will spend every waking moment in tiny  
14 wire cages where their waste piles up beneath them.  
15 Their feet never touch the ground. Deprived of basic  
16 elements of well-being, they suffer intense  
17 psychological distress which manifests most  
18 horrifically when they attack or cannibalize their  
19 cage mates. Wounds and infections go untreated.  
20 Only their pelts and that mattering. These animals  
21 are then killed through bludgeoning, neck-breaking,  
22 stomping, gassing, electrocution through the mouth  
23 and genitals, throats being slit while shackled  
24 upside down, slow asphyxiation, dehydration, and  
25 starvation after days of psychological terror in a

2 trap, perhaps gnawing off a leg in a desperate  
3 attempt at freedom or, perhaps worst of all, being  
4 skinned alive. Death by electrocution, it's a  
5 practice so barbaric that our own state legislature  
6 banned it in 2013. Other jurisdictions consider it a  
7 best practice. Undercover footage and eyewitness  
8 accounts bring these grim facts to life and I would  
9 like to share some of the footage with you today  
10 which illustrates more powerfully than words can,  
11 then needless suffering of these animals. This  
12 video, created by fur-free New York does contain some  
13 graphic images of animals suffering, so people are  
14 welcome to leave the room. I want to give everyone a  
15 second. If you want to leave the room, you can raise  
16 your hand and leave the room before we play the  
17 video. If anyone wants to leave, this is graphic  
18 financially are about to show. Okay. Let's play the  
19 video.

20 VIDEO PLAYING: Meet Bailey. Bailey was  
21 born on a fur farm. She has never touched grass.  
22 Bailey will be kept in this same cage until she is  
23 skinned for her pelt. It takes 11 Bailey's to make a  
24 single coat. And that's not unusual. In fact, the  
25 fur industry kills over 100 million animals every

2 year. 85 percent of them, like Bailey, lived their  
3 entire lives on fur farms, many suffering from  
4 anxiety induced psychosis and sometimes even  
5 cannibalizing their cage mates in response to  
6 confinement until it is their turn to be killed and  
7 one of a variety of cruel ways. The other 15 to 20  
8 percent are caught with brutal traps, the use of  
9 which is practically unregulated. Stuck in these  
10 barbaric contraptions for days at a time, dehydrated  
11 and desperate animals will thrash around to the point  
12 of breaking their own bones and sometimes even to  
13 offer their own limbs in their attempt to escape.  
14 That's a lot of suffering. It's also a lot of damage  
15 to the environment. According to the World Bank, for  
16 production is one of the world's five worst  
17 industries for toxic metal pollution and uses  
18 formaldehyde and chromium, both of which have been  
19 linked to cancer. Fur farming creates ammonia runoff  
20 that leads to toxic eutrophication within our own  
21 water supply and studies show it's much worse for the  
22 environment than faux fur and other textile  
23 alternatives. And the most important and saddest  
24 fact of all, it's all unnecessary. New York is the  
25 fashion capital of the world, which makes it prefer

2 capital of the world. Banning the sale of fur here  
3 means the demand for it in fashion stops. When  
4 demand for fur stops, and the inhumane suffering  
5 stops. The environmental pollution ends. The fur  
6 industry is claiming that a New York City ban on the  
7 fur sales will cause job loss. The truth is fur  
8 manufacturing jobs only account for one half of one  
9 percent of all New York City fashion jobs and the  
10 skills used in fur jobs are transferable. Over 1000  
11 of fashion's most respected designers, brands and  
12 retailers have already moved on from fur.  
13 Innovations and material technology including bio  
14 fabrication, high tech and sustainable recycled  
15 fibers, and plant-based organics don't involve a  
16 single trap or cage and are creating more and more  
17 job opportunities. Good designs should not only be  
18 beautiful, but ethical. This is New York. We're  
19 better than fur and it's time we proved it. Stop the  
20 suffering of innocent animals. Stop the poisoning of  
21 our environment and support a move to more  
22 responsible, sustainable fashion by the simple act of  
23 voting to make New York City fur-free.

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: This video is a mere  
25 snapshot of the conditions for countless animals

2 killed for their fur merely so that we can enjoy a  
3 coat, some trims, or a key chain. A ban on fur will  
4 mean an end to an unimaginable suffering and  
5 senseless violence. It will also be an impetus for  
6 innovation and evolution, a challenge which the  
7 creative minds of our city are well-suited to take  
8 on. I take seriously the consequences a fur sales  
9 ban would have on businesses and I urge local  
10 furriers and manufactures to diversify and embrace  
11 innovations that are already underway in the fashion  
12 industry. Companies are revolutionizing the creation  
13 of raw apparel materials, creating faux furs and  
14 other textiles from recycled materials and from ocean  
15 plastics. Faux fur made of hemp and organic cotton  
16 is now available and cutting edge bio fabricators are  
17 developing ethical, lab grown, fur. Opponents of  
18 this bill have decried the potential loss of a  
19 historic tradition that is older than the city  
20 itself. Pointed to a 75. If you are familiar with  
21 it, then you will know that it features a pair of  
22 beavers, symbols of the past, but also of our  
23 president. Beavers once populated our stated numbers  
24 that estimated 16 million, but colonial trapping for  
25 their pelts and trade practices decimated their

2 numbers. By nearly nineteenth century, they had  
3 vanished entirely from the city of New York. But  
4 through our conservation efforts and the animal's  
5 tenacity, we are seeing a resurgence. In 2007, the  
6 first being over and over 200 years reappeared in the  
7 Bronx River. That is a legacy worth honoring and  
8 worthy of a modern day city. If beavers are a  
9 feature of our city flag, it should be because they  
10 are alive and well in our rivers and streams, not  
11 because they are dead on racks in our stories. Much  
12 has changed over 400 years including our attitudes  
13 towards the treatment of animals. We no longer see  
14 animals as just a resource to exploit for any reason  
15 at any cost. We already banned or severely restrict  
16 the import or sale of products from several animals  
17 including African and Asian elephant ivory, rhino  
18 horns, sea turtle shells, and leather-- walrus  
19 ivory. Several species of migratory birds whose  
20 feathers were used in hats and polar bears, to name a  
21 few. New York City is also banned the use of  
22 elephants and other exotic animals in the circus and  
23 we are ready and able to do more to protect them.  
24 This legislation cultivates and promotes a culture  
25 that is humane to animals. It is the moral thing to

2 do. Thank you, Chairman Espinal. I turn it back to  
3 you.

4 [Applause]

5 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Hold your-- Hold  
6 your applause, please.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet. Quiet, please.

8 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you, Corey.

9 And before we move forward, I just want to  
10 knowledgeably have been joined by Karen Koslowitz  
11 from Queens. We have Council member Brad Lander from  
12 Brooklyn. We have Keith Powers from Manhattan, Bob  
13 Holden from Queens. Also Margaret Chin from  
14 Manhattan. Peter Koo from Queens and Chaim Deutsch  
15 from Brooklyn. Great to see everyone here.

16 Thinking, Corey, again. Before we call the first  
17 panel, I would like to reiterate that I understand  
18 the concerns of both the animal advocates and those  
19 fighting to save their businesses. I do share the  
20 Speaker's concerns regarding the inhumane treatment  
21 of animals and it's an issue I care about. The  
22 environment, also a big issue that matters to me. I  
23 also understand the concerns of small business  
24 owners, some of our here today who are fearful of  
25 what this bill could mean for them and the people

2 they employ. The goal of today's hearing is to get  
3 to the bottom of the facts. I look forward to  
4 hearing testimony from all sides that addresses the  
5 concerns over the sale of fur apparel. I know that  
6 there is a lot of misinformation that can be used to  
7 advance arguments on either side of the debate, so I  
8 look forward to hearing accurate and evidence-based  
9 claims today. Finally, as the Chair of Consumer  
10 Affairs Committee, I pride myself on making myself  
11 available to hear from people from all sides. I look  
12 around today and I see that I am definitely going to  
13 have that opportunity, so I thank you all for taking  
14 your time today to provide your feedback. I also  
15 want to assure everyone that, even though we will be  
16 setting the time clock so that we can hear as many  
17 people as possible, all of your testimony will be  
18 given equal weight when we consider whether we move  
19 this bill forward. I would now like to call up the  
20 first panel. We have Tim Gunn from Project Runway,  
21 Eileen Jefferson from HSVMA, Joshua Catcher from  
22 Parson's School of Design, and Allie Feldman-Taylor,  
23 Voters for Animal Rights.

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, Mr. Chairman, so  
25 this first panel are folks that are in favor in the

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

20

2 second panel are going to be people that are opposed  
3 to the bill.

4 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Okay. Great. You  
5 may begin once you are ready.

6 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Just make sure your mic  
7 is on. If you hit the button.

8 TIM GUNN: It's on.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes.

10 TIM GUNN: Thank you. Honorable  
11 councilmembers, throughout my career as chair of the  
12 department of fashion design at Parsons, as chief  
13 creative officer at Liz Claiborne, and as cohost of  
14 Project Runway, I have advocated against fur. The  
15 fashion business has a troubling history with  
16 animals, but it is quickly evolving. Believe it or  
17 not, furriers used to slice up chimpanzees, gorillas,  
18 monkeys, lovebirds, baby seals, and tigers for their  
19 fur. Most of that was declared illegal in the 1970s  
20 when the federal government enacted the Marine mammal  
21 protection act and the Endangered Species Act. Now,  
22 it's time to safeguard all the other animals from  
23 such gratuitous violence by supporting City Council  
24 Speaker Corey Johnson's bill to ban first sales in  
25 New York City, fall makers of already done in Los

2 Angeles and San Francisco. There isn't much to be  
3 happy about in politics today, but this trend towards  
4 kinds Ms. should give everyone hope. At Parsons, the  
5 fur trade enjoyed years of unchallenged promotion in  
6 which it enticed budding designers to work with fur  
7 by offering them free pelts, trips to Scandinavia,  
8 and sponsorships. I introduced a program in which  
9 PETA was given equal time to screen videos showing  
10 what happened to animals on fur farms around the  
11 world both for their pelts and up in New York  
12 showrooms. Foxes, rabbits, chinchillas, and even  
13 dogs and cats are anally electrocuted, cast,  
14 bludgeoned, and often skinned alive. Student  
15 interest in the firm program dried up as quickly as  
16 enthusiasm for sustainable design increased.  
17 Consumer demand for fur has plummeted. According to  
18 the treasurer of Greater Fur New York, just 14 retail  
19 storefronts selling for a remained in the garment  
20 district in 2018, down from 450 in 1977. This year,  
21 there are even fewer. Fashion has evolved.  
22 Designers are finding it increasingly easy to be  
23 created without being destructive. Hundreds of  
24 fabrics have been developed that are more eco-  
25 friendly and animal friendly. I think you very much.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

??

2 JOSHUA CATCHER: Thank you. My name is  
3 Joshua Catcher. I am a fashion designer, author, and  
4 educator. I have taught at Parsons and lectured  
5 internationally on the topics of ethics and  
6 sustainability and fashion. The beauty of a garment  
7 should be matched by the beauty of how it was made.  
8 This is why furs the epitome of bad design. So many  
9 respected brands, retailers, cities, and countries  
10 have already left for her behind. In this age of  
11 transparency, any positive symbol of for crumbles  
12 when the truth about how it is made is revealed. In  
13 the past two months, five major studies and poles  
14 from respective firms like the Boston Consulting  
15 Group show that demand for furs plummeting. Shoppers  
16 want cruelty-free products. The fur industry's  
17 profits hinge on lies they tell and truths they hide  
18 and for production is hidden for good reason. A  
19 typical fox or a mink on a factory farm well  
20 languish. These are wild animals stock in small wire  
21 cages for their entire lives. This is not natural.  
22 Then they are annually or vaginally electrocuted,  
23 cast, or worse some are skinned alive. Imagine the  
24 desperation. Consider the animal's perspective.  
25 Now, multiply that by over 100 million. The fur

2 industry wants you to think that formaldehyde,  
3 chromium, and chemically died for is not truly  
4 sustainable. Their misleading ads have already been  
5 exposed by the French and Dutch advertising standards  
6 Authority's for making dubious natural, sustainable,  
7 and humane treatment claims. Those same ads are  
8 running here in American fashion magazines. Let's  
9 talk about jobs. The fur industry claims that  
10 furriers can do no other work, yet they know how to  
11 design, pattern, sew, drape, sample, merchandise, and  
12 more. Fur is simply one input. I've taught fashion  
13 students and I assure you that every single one of  
14 those skills are valuable, and demand, and  
15 transferable. Fur is obsolete. Thank you.

16 Honorable Council members, my name is Dr.  
17 Eileen Jefferson. I'm a full-time practicing  
18 veterinarian as well as the New York State  
19 representative for the Humane Society Veterinary  
20 Medical Association. We are a national Association  
21 of veterinary professionals focused on animal health  
22 and welfare. On behalf of our 9000 veterinary  
23 professional members nationwide and 330 in New York,  
24 we support passage of intro 1476 to ban the sale of  
25 fur in New York City. The production of for relies

2 upon inhumane methods of husbandry and trapping,  
3 which drastically compromise the health and welfare  
4 of the animals used. Millions of rabbits, mink,  
5 foxes, and other wild animals are confined to  
6 lifelong in cramped, wire floored cages on factory  
7 fur farms. There, they are deprived of their  
8 abilities to engage in natural behaviors such as  
9 hunting, digging, and swimming. They are often kept  
10 in unnatural social groups, as well. For example,  
11 mean car forest to live in extremely close proximity  
12 to each other despite not doing so in nature. The  
13 contrive living conditions on fur farms inevitably  
14 lead animals to suffer severe psychological and  
15 physical distress. Instances of unproductive  
16 repetitive behavior, a sign of compromise  
17 psychological well-being, have been well documented  
18 on fur farms, as have been cannibalism, untreated  
19 wounds, foot deformities, and I infections. The  
20 animals on fur farms are typically count via  
21 medically and ethically objectionable methods such as  
22 gassing or electrocution. Less frequently, animals  
23 may be trapped in the wild for their pelts. Animals  
24 caught and crippling leg cold traps also undergo  
25 immense compromise and suffering, which can include

2 hemorrhage, lacerations, psychological distress, and  
3 so of trauma. Biggest animals are often forced to  
4 spend days lingering without food or water. In  
5 addition, these archaic traps remain a public health  
6 and environmental concern as they may injure and kill  
7 unintended targets including threatened species,  
8 pets, or even human beings. Consumer choices have,  
9 for many years, been trending away from further  
10 products. We hope the New York City Council will  
11 take a firm lead on this issue. We strongly support  
12 and child 1476. Thank you.

13 Speaker Johnson, Chairman as banal, and  
14 members of the Committee on Consumer Affairs, my name  
15 is Allie Feldman-Taylor and I am the President and  
16 Founder of Voters for Animal Rights in Brooklyn. I'm  
17 here as a resident of New York City, a voter, and in  
18 my official capacity to represent our thousands of  
19 supporters and New York City. We are an all-  
20 volunteer, grassroots organization. Today you will  
21 hear testimony from those who support and those that  
22 oppose. I ask that you consider the motives behind  
23 every person who testifies today. That dozens of  
24 experts in hundreds of advocates who are in this room  
25 in support of banning the sale of fur our here for

2 one simple reason. Animals do not have a voice and  
3 suffered greatly at the hands of the very people who  
4 are here to oppose this bill. Those who testify in  
5 opposition do it because they profit from the abuse  
6 that this bill seeks to end. In front of you, you  
7 have a bound packet. We prepared an informational  
8 packet for your consideration that I think you will  
9 find very helpful. Inside, you will find facts and  
10 evidence in support of the bill including polling  
11 numbers showing that 75 percent of New York City  
12 voters support this bill. This poll was conducted by  
13 Mason Dixon and shows overwhelming support for the  
14 legislation across every borough, every demographic,  
15 and every political party. Also in your packet is a  
16 letter of support from over 15 not-for-profit  
17 organizations that are part of our fur-free NYC  
18 coalition representing hundreds of thousands of  
19 supporters. There is also a letter of support from  
20 over 30 veterinarians. The fur industry cannot win a  
21 civil debate on the merits, so they resort to using  
22 their money to bully and spread misinformation to the  
23 general public and the city Council, representing  
24 everything that is wrong in politics. They have  
25 hired expensive lobbyists and marketing firms to spin

2 the truth, send out thousands of mailers and robo-  
3 calls of this information and attacking some of you  
4 on this very committee and have bought ads that are  
5 riddled with lies to cause fear among New Yorkers.  
6 Andrea said only that has gone so far as to create  
7 fake twitter accounts, controlled by the fur  
8 industry, pretending to be New York City residents  
9 and attacking speaker Johnson personally. We have  
10 called on the fur industry to apologize for these  
11 tactics, but they have refused. All of these tactics  
12 we find ridiculous, but we're going to take the high  
13 road while they take the low road. We are at a  
14 pivotal juncture in our society. We can either take  
15 back our democracy from unethical industries or allow  
16 those with money to undermine and destroy what makes  
17 New York a beacon of light for a good. We ask humbly  
18 to reject their lives, abusive practices, and support  
19 a more compassionate New York City. You just saw  
20 actual footage of the animals being changed, killed,  
21 skinned alive, and trapped in steel traps. This bill  
22 is about those animals who do not have a voice. For  
23 is a relic of the past and has no place in a  
24 progressive, civilized New York City. Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 28

3 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Speaker  
4 Johnson?

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you very much.  
6 Thank you to the panel for testifying today. So I  
7 have a few questions and anyone can answer. So, some  
8 argue that this industry means to be a more strictly  
9 regulated. That if we created additional  
10 regulations, that that would be a solution. Is it  
11 possible, do you believe, to farm animals for their  
12 fur in a humane manner that could be implemented  
13 through legislation?

14 JOSHUA CATCHER: No. The fur industry is  
15 entirely self-regulated. The auditors are paid for  
16 by the fur industry. This is an industry that any  
17 welfare measure cannot meet the needs of these  
18 animals.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Anyone else on the  
20 panel?

21 EILEEN JEFFERSON: I would point out that  
22 there's a big difference here between what we might  
23 use with farm animals using-- for farm animals that  
24 are used for food. Those are domesticated animals  
25 and they are more able to benefit from incremental  
change. But because we are dealing with wild

2 animals, the husbandry of those animals is always  
3 going to have an element of an inhumane quality  
4 because we are never going to be able to keep them in  
5 an environment that even starts to mimic their  
6 natural environment all they are being utilized.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Tim, I had a question  
8 for you. When I have talked to some furriers about  
9 the fact that some of the major fashion designers  
10 that I had mentioned in your opening statement, that  
11 you had mentioned in your testimony, whether it be  
12 Donna Karen or Donatello Versace or Stella McCartney,  
13 the list goes on and on and on of folks who said they  
14 are no longer using for in their fashion label. What  
15 folks have said to me is, for those fashion labels,  
16 fur is really incidental. It's not a major component  
17 of their business, so they are able to make that  
18 decision without it affecting their bottom line in a  
19 significant way and that they made de-- What I've  
20 heard is they've made the decision off of outside  
21 pressure, not because of their own ethical concerns  
22 related defer. I was wondering if you had any  
23 information or perspective given your role in the  
24 fashion world and your interaction with these major

2 designers that you've worked with over the years made  
3 this decision.

4           TIM GUNN:     Speaker Johnson, I would like  
5 to respond by saying that there are many people who  
6 believe that fashion and fur are inextricable, is  
7 that they are married and I say that that is  
8 preposterous. And as in my role as an educator, I  
9 would like to think that I educated eight years worth  
10 of young designers who came to terms with the fact  
11 that fashion and fur are not even related in a manner  
12 of speaking and that they don't even belong together.  
13 And that anyone who wants a fur like garment can go  
14 to faux sources. I really profoundly believe that  
15 it's an entirely unnecessary waste of lives and even  
16 human labor to be supporting this industry, but  
17 that's also very, very personal. And in my role at  
18 Liz Claiborne where I was Chief Creative Officer, at  
19 the time that I entered the company, there were 48  
20 brands and we found collectively to go fur-free and  
21 all of the brands. And some of them were fledgling.  
22 There were up-and-coming. Others were more mature  
23 and had a loyal following. And in my role on project  
24 runway, is the only way that I will participate in  
25 this program is is, in fact, it is for free. Then we

2 agree and it certainly has never affected the quality  
3 or the perception of the work. Thank you.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: As supporters of  
5 trapping is argued that it is an important  
6 conservation method and I wanted to hear any  
7 perspective on if you believe that trapping has  
8 conservation value and what are the alternatives to  
9 trapping? I don't know if you-- from the Humane  
10 Society for Veterinary Medical Association, if you  
11 had any perspective?

12 EILEEN JEFFERSON: Approximately 85 percent  
13 of the fur that is produced is produced in factory  
14 for farms, so trapping does make up the minority.  
15 The method used for trapping is, obviously,  
16 inherently inhumane and-- I'm sorry. Could you  
17 repeat the question one time?

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I was just wondering if  
19 there is been information that said that trapping is  
20 an important conservation method and if you had a  
21 perspective on that.

22 EILEEN JEFFERSON: As far as I know, they  
23 animals that are used in for that are trapped for fur  
24 are not species that are overpopulated. The ecology  
25

3 of the situation is it does not at all benefit from  
4 animals being trapped.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And there is a very  
6 serious concern and one that has been a concern to me  
7 even though, of course, this is my bill that we have  
8 put forward and that we are hearing today. And I  
9 said very openly that I am a big animal lover and  
10 want us to live in a more humane and just society and  
11 CV, but there is a concern about the loss of jobs.  
12 There is a concern about people whose families have  
13 worked in this industry for a very long time and  
14 their skills said is working on manufacturing these  
15 doc-- these garments and the name on the solve them.  
16 What would happen to these individuals where this is  
17 their lives? And I wanted to understand from the--  
18 from the fashion side, from the side of manufacturing  
19 close what your perspective on that is, that there is  
20 also a human cost involved here, file, if we go down  
21 this route. I don't know Joshua and Tim--

22 JOSHUA CATCHER: I can stick to that.  
23 These skills-- I think the mythology that's been  
24 perpetuated here is that skilled laborers can do no  
25 other work other than this one singular input which  
is for. And working with for requires many, many

2 skills and those skills can be used and used with  
3 different inputs. I personally produce clothing here  
4 in New York City. I personally produce accessories  
5 here in New York City and I work with manufacturers  
6 that use a variety of materials, some including fur  
7 and they are very happy to work with the other  
8 materials that I bring them. And I pay them and they  
9 make things. I can imagine a person who is a skilled  
10 manufacturer and producer who knows how to work with  
11 for her that can't work with any other fabric. I  
12 just can't imagine that.

13 TIM GUNN: Me, I agree. A material is a  
14 materialism material. In repurpose sing a skill set  
15 for a different material is-- I don't want to make  
16 it sound as though it's instantaneous, but it  
17 certainly doable and it's what people in other  
18 industries to win certain aspects of that industry  
19 disappear. So I would say it's easily achieved. I  
20 agree with Joshua.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. Are there  
22 any other members that have signed up for questions?  
23 Yeah? Council member Cabrera?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so  
25 much and thank you for being a voice for those,

2 literally, who can't speak for themselves. I had a  
3 couple of questions. One was in regards to the  
4 document that you provided. It says the People for  
5 Ethical Treatment of Animals has also shown how more  
6 than half of the fur sold in the United States is  
7 imported from China, a country that has virtually no  
8 regulations to protect fur and animals and that those  
9 furs sometimes come-- excuse me. Come from domestic  
10 dogs and cats and are internationally--  
11 intentionally or intentionally mislabeled as fox, as  
12 other animal species. Can you give me more-- give  
13 any more details on that?

14 JOSHUA CATCHER: I can answer that  
15 quickly. The reason that the Truth in Fur Labeling  
16 Act was passed into law several years ago was because  
17 of this very problem. There was loopholes that allow  
18 the furs coming into the United States, more than 50  
19 percent of those are imported and coming from places  
20 like China. There is a well-documented and  
21 scientific evidence based history of fibers being  
22 found, sold at major department stores through major  
23 brands and ending up here in New York City and, when  
24 they are tested, some of them have been found to be  
25 domesticated cat, domesticated dog, or the incorrect

2 species. So there was an entirely-- This is  
3 evidence of how unregulated this industry is.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And that is  
5 something that we are is finding specifically here,  
6 right here in New York City?

7 JOSHUA CATCHER: Yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Wow. Amazing.  
9 Talk to me, Tim or maybe anybody in the panel. How  
10 have you seen the cultural change where you mentioned  
11 earlier we used to have 400 plus manufacturers here  
12 in the city and now we are down, I think, to 14. Can  
13 you talk to me a little bit about the cultural  
14 change, the sentiments of New Yorkers.

15 TIM GUNN: Well, there used to be 450  
16 first storefronts. I don't know how many  
17 manufacturers, actually. And that was in the 19  
18 seventies. There is an erosion in the perception of  
19 furs being a luxury item and for as being a modern  
20 item. I know that the fur industry likes to say it's  
21 not your grandmother's coat anymore and there been  
22 many attempts and I won't qualify them, but many  
23 attempts to make firm more modern and therefore more  
24 relatable it just doesn't have the sort of luster  
25 that it used to have and I don't believe we should

2 return to a time when it does. And the more support  
3 we can give to our alternative textiles and, in  
4 particular, faux fur, just the better off the city  
5 will be in this country will be and, quite frankly,  
6 the world will be. And it's exciting to be here  
7 today and to say that we are on the cusp of that.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Indeed.

9 JOSHUA CATCHER: In regards to the trends  
10 that we are seeing coming from a business standpoint  
11 and an innovation standpoint, there are currently  
12 right now companies here in the Northeast who are  
13 growing leather in a laboratory. There are companies  
14 who have already have on the market lab grown silks.  
15 There are companies in Europe who are working on lab  
16 grown fur. We can grow protein fibers without the  
17 animal attached to it and there is so much potential  
18 and innovation in some of this technology. We have  
19 companies that are making bio synthetics from LG. We  
20 have companies that are crafting infinitely  
21 recyclable synthetics from the waist of the fishing  
22 industry, from fishing nets. We can make luxurious  
23 fabrics from citrus peels, from pineapple, from  
24 mushrooms, from agricultural waste. The limit is  
25 only a limit of imagination and a limit of and need

2 for innovation. In this innovation is going to  
3 result in jobs that are here, where the innovation is  
4 happening. And as an educator, I can see that these  
5 students that I've worked with, they want access to  
6 the most cutting-edge sustainable, ethical-- real  
7 sustainable, ethical materials. And they don't--  
8 most of them don't want to be working with the  
9 materials of the past. It's limiting from a design  
10 standpoint and there are ethical and sustainability  
11 pitfalls that are unavoidable.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And so it's  
13 totally and necessary, that's-- that's the point  
14 they are making, right?

15 JOSHUA CATCHER: I'm sorry?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: It's totally  
17 unnecessary to--

18 JOSHUA CATCHER: Within the context--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: with all the  
20 technology that we have--

21 JOSHUA CATCHER: Within the context of a  
22 place like New York City, yes. It's unnecessary.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Absolutely.  
24 Last, if you could give me a little bit more of the  
25 environmental impact that we will have if we were--

2 positive environmental impact if we were to have the  
3 ban of fur in New York City.

4 JOSHUA CATCHER: What would the positive  
5 environmental impact being?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yes.

7 JOSHUA CATCHER: Well, think of a--  
8 imagine a fur farm. This is a factory farm. Like  
9 any factory farm, it's fossil fuel dependent. These  
10 are animals that are crammed into a very small space.  
11 The ecosystems have not evolved to handle that many  
12 animals and not small amount of space. So you have  
13 to consider the high concentrations of ammonia and  
14 phosphorus. Their foods are supplemented with things  
15 like this. It ends up in runoff in the local aquatic  
16 ecosystems and it causes something called toxic  
17 eutrophication which sucks the oxygen out of aquatic  
18 systems and killed wildlife. And then you can't go  
19 in that water. You can look in Canada, in Nova  
20 Scotia, there is a wonderful case study by the Suzuki  
21 foundation of what-- of how the fur industry has  
22 devastated the aquatic ecosystems in that area.  
23 [Background comments] These family farms are making  
24 the water-- You can't go in the water. It's  
25 poisonous. There's toxic cyanobacteria. This is not

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2a

2 an eco-friendly industry. Just because the fiber is  
3 considered natural, what goes into it, formaldehyde,  
4 chromium, as a dies, all of these things are not  
5 ecologically friendly and they are definitely not  
6 sustainable.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Well on to  
8 take a moment and to commend our speaker. I'm a co-  
9 prime of this bill for really listening to New  
10 Yorkers. It's hard to get New Yorkers to agree on  
11 just about any issue and when you have 75 percent of  
12 them, and I looked at the numbers, the data from the  
13 Mason Dixon, and it's all across every borough. The  
14 numbers almost look the same, so it's not-- let me  
15 just be clear. This is not a Manhattan thing.  
16 People in the Bronx, from the Bronx, Queens,  
17 Brooklyn, Staten Island, everybody is echoing this  
18 voice that the time is now and we can't stay lagging  
19 behind. LA already passed it, San Francisco, now  
20 it's our turn. Thank you so much.

21 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you, Council  
22 member Cabrera. Next we have Council member  
23 Rodriguez.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.  
25 First of all, I've been clear, you know, in my years

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

10

2 serving in the Council that for me animal rights for  
3 me as we fight for human rights and I think that we  
4 have a responsibility to stand not only for the  
5 current generation, but for the children that I see  
6 the youngest ones sitting there. They stand for my  
7 two daughters who are six and 12 who want to be sure  
8 that everyone, especially those who represent the  
9 industry, realize that we have a big responsibility  
10 to decide the future of our city. And I think that  
11 it is important to find a way on how investor gets a  
12 return from the investment that the fashion industry  
13 continues me to live in the city of New York. But  
14 the question is, how can that happen at the same time  
15 that also we address animal rights? How can I  
16 explain to my six-year-old that loves the chinchilla  
17 that I support continue industry that they kill those  
18 type of animals only to fulfill, you know, [inaudible  
19 00:39:37] in New York and in other place a demand.  
20 So I think that, again, we've been in similar fights  
21 in the past and I really think that leadership and  
22 speaker Johnson is standing for animal rights not  
23 only in this bill, but in many other bills. So,  
24 hopefully, we will continue working together and he  
25 will continue leading conversation not only with

2 those like myself, even though my name is not there,  
3 please add my name to the bill. But also continue  
4 the conversation with those were against it. I see  
5 some individuals, friends of mine that we have been  
6 marching for human rights. So this is an opportunity  
7 for us also to be able to address animal rights as a  
8 top priority in the city of New York. So, with that,  
9 I just have a question on which is like why is fur  
10 any worse than buy leather? Because that's a-- That  
11 question is more because those who are being  
12 organized against the bill, they say, well, if you  
13 are working on this bill, what about leather? So  
14 what answer can we give to those who are against this  
15 bill when it comes to why is fur any worse than  
16 buying leather?

17 EILEEN JEFFERSON: Leather is often  
18 produced as a byproduct of other industries where as  
19 the fur industry, these are millions of animals that  
20 are either trapped or maintained in these fur factor  
21 farms solely for the purpose of raising them in,  
22 usually, what's a truncated lifespan for the sake of  
23 their pelts. So they are really just spending a few  
24 years in a torturous situation for a wild animal  
25 solely for the sake of that fur. So there are many

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

12

2 people who, you know, for example, will eat meat and  
3 who will wear leather who will absolutely not wear  
4 fur for that reason. It is a particularly  
5 objectionable method of husbandry for animals and  
6 especially because they are wild animals and subject  
7 is much more fear and stress. And it's not something  
8 that comes out of them. It's something that they are  
9 evolutionarily programmed to be in a certain  
10 environment. And when they are taken out of that  
11 environment or they are never even in that  
12 environment and they are raised in a situation that  
13 is so unnatural, and is a particularly egregious  
14 method of producing something that is really very  
15 unnecessary and is really just for the sake of a  
16 look.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Peter Koo?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you very much  
20 for coming. My question is that we have been wearing  
21 fur coats since historic times, no? And I believe  
22 Adam and Eve probably wore fur coats or something  
23 like that. So, I understand you have really good  
24 intentions to ban fur sales because it did create  
25 some cruelty to animals. No? So if there's a way we

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

12

2 treat the animals differently and we-- We kill cows  
3 every day. Thousands of them, but we kill them in a  
4 humane way. All right? You-- So, is there any way  
5 you guys can amend to the-- to the ban like if you  
6 can modify the way how we treat animals in the farms,  
7 how to treat them humanely and how we kill them  
8 humanely. Things like that. Can you guys agree to  
9 some other ways of my-- Maybe a law can be  
10 [inaudible 00:43:59] we take 10 years to taper off  
11 the sales so that those in the industry have a way to  
12 adjust to the total ban. Because a total ban is kind  
13 of harsh to those people who have been making a  
14 living on this trade for many, many years. For many,  
15 many generation. So it's hard for us to say, hey,  
16 stop this. You cannot do this. So we give them,  
17 say, five-- ten years to stop this sale in New York  
18 City. Can you guys amend to that?

19 EILEEN JEFFERSON: I would say that because  
20 this is an issue that is really been extremely  
21 controversial for many, many decades that the writing  
22 has been on the wall for a long time about this  
23 particular product that something that people a bit  
24 aware, just in terms of the market trends and  
25 consumer choices, the way it's going is less and less

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

^^

2 a month towards fur. And especially, you know, the  
3 younger generation is really very disinterested and  
4 for which is why they are using these marketing  
5 campaigns to try to appeal to younger people, but  
6 this is something I fail and I have seen this in  
7 other sectors available use in society is that as we  
8 go towards faster action, the people are actually  
9 being aided because we're helping the evolution of  
10 something that is going to be going away. So I feel  
11 like the sooner that the business is get on board  
12 with this, the better it will actually be for them.

13 TIM GUNN: And I would just like to  
14 repeat that there were 450 first storefronts in 19--  
15 in the 1970s and there were 14 in 2018. So says a  
16 tremendous amount.

17 JOSHUA CATCHER: And also like to  
18 reiterate that this industry, when it comes to  
19 conditions and welfare measures, this is self-  
20 regulated with auditors paid by the industry. Any  
21 welfare measures cost money and this affects the  
22 bottom line. I've seen animals on fur farms that  
23 have the highest ethical standards, supposedly, in  
24 Europe with untreated infractions that have been  
25 languishing. Any measure to accommodate animal

2 welfare chops away at that bottom line and it's a  
3 fragile economic system for farms. Some of them, the  
4 smallest increase in the price of food, for example,  
5 would put fur businesses under. So what would be  
6 required is just not economically feasible for  
7 something like the fur industry.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. Mark Levine?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you, Mr.  
10 Chair and Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am incredibly  
11 proud that this city has become more and more  
12 attentive to the issues of animal welfare and to  
13 humane treatment of animals, both domesticated and  
14 wild. I do want to ask you just a couple of  
15 questions. I think most New Yorkers have never seen  
16 an animal trap and probably are familiar with even  
17 how the mechanism works and may believe that it say,  
18 quote, natural way to kill an animal. Maybe you  
19 could describe the impact on animals and how these  
20 traps work.

21 EILEEN JEFFERSON: Actually, Dan Matthews  
22 is here and he brought a trap with him. If you would  
23 like him to demonstrate it, he can do that right now.  
24 [Background comments] If that's okay.

25 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Uh--

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

16

2 [Background comments]

3 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Is it not working?

4 DAN MATTHEWS: It works.

5 [Background comments]

6 EILEEN JEFFERSON: I would just narrate for  
7 a minute that this is not like a mouse trap where the  
8 animal is instantaneously killed or even-- it's not  
9 a situation like that. It's something where the  
10 animal's leg will be in this trap and the animal will  
11 linger like that potentially for days. So, it's--  
12 This is not something that kills the animal humanely  
13 and quickly.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Dan, we can try it  
15 later. Maybe you can--

16 [Background comments]

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: We're gonna (sic)--

18 EILEEN JEFFERSON: They're not usually used  
19 on carpet.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yeah. Council member  
21 Levine is going to ask some additional questions.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: I did want to ask  
23 about--

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

17

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: an issue of  
3 particular concern-- Yeah.

4 DAN MATTHEWS: It was the carpet that  
5 was not cooperating. This is a leg hole trap. They  
6 cost 10 dollars on amazon.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Speak in the microphone,  
8 please.

9 DAN MATTHEWS: Thanks. This is a leg  
10 hole trap. They cost 10 dollars on Amazon. They  
11 have been banned in over 100 countries. Their legal  
12 and most of the United States and this trap is meant  
13 for coyotes, but they do not discriminate. They  
14 capture dogs and cats and owls and other wildlife and  
15 let's take a look and how they work. There's a  
16 reason 100 countries have outlawed these traps. New  
17 Jersey has outlawed--

18 [Background comments]

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: That's okay. You're  
20 going to be on an additional panel and let's go  
21 back-- Council member Levine, why don't you ask this  
22 panel questions.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And look forward to  
24 hearing more about that. Just on another matter,  
25 there is concern in New York City's ultra-Orthodox US

2 communities about traditional garb the including  
3 known as a shtreimel that are made of fur and I'm  
4 wondering, as advocates, you have a take on an  
5 exemption for religious garb.

6 ALLIE FELDMAN-TAYLOR: I'll take the tough  
7 one. I am a practicing Jewish woman myself. But I am  
8 not Orthodox, however, I am very familiar with the  
9 community being that my best friend is actually  
10 Orthodox herself. And, while she does not support  
11 the hats, I think this is a tough line and that, you  
12 know, we have to find a balance and while, you know,  
13 I think any animal rights advocate, we would not like  
14 to make exceptions, we do understand that that may be  
15 the reality. Our goal at the end of the day is to  
16 reduce suffering for the greatest number of animals  
17 possible. And if having a religious exemption means  
18 that we can have this law passed and save millions of  
19 animals per year, then, of course, that is something  
20 that we would support.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you. And  
22 thank you to the Speaker and the Chair. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you, Mark.  
24 Helen Rosenthal?

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

1a

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
3 much, Chair. I do want to start by saying that I  
4 applaud our panel and our speaker for their longtime  
5 leadership to ban fur. I support the ban for three  
6 reasons. One is killing the animals is unethical and  
7 unnecessary. Two because of the work of PETA and the  
8 fashion leaders like Tim Gunn, Michael Coors, Gucci,  
9 yourself, Joshua. For products are not available  
10 more, as proven by the 70 percent figure, is there  
11 really a demand for fur anymore. And third, there is  
12 a strong exception for religious customs are not as  
13 important to me. I do up one question and although  
14 this is not part of the bill, I do just want to hear  
15 your opinion about feathers and in particular  
16 thinking about Canada goose down jackets. Is there  
17 an ethical reason to move to ban feathers, as well?  
18 Or would you put in the category as he talked about  
19 before, when leather in the use of cows for meat,  
20 where do you come down on that issue?

21 JOSHUA CATCHER: What I'll say is that  
22 when garments end up on the rack, what the majority  
23 of us are exposed to as consumers, there tends to be  
24 a conflation of materials. We see the outer material  
25 with the lining, with the trim, with the feathers,

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING  
2 with the fur, and it all seems like it's coming from  
3 the same place, but these are independent industries  
4 of each other and I don't believe there's any reason  
5 why we shouldn't be able to focus on one industry and  
6 me political and ethical decisions based on that  
7 particular industry. I will say that there is a  
8 phenomenally awe-inspiring history of what transpired  
9 legally and politically in the feather trade,  
10 especially here in New York City. It was-- It  
11 resulted in many laws protecting animals from being  
12 driven to extinction and from some of the worst  
13 cruelties to animals used for the feather trade. So  
14 there is a history there that I think is telling  
15 and-- Thank you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you very  
17 much.

18 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: We have Keith  
19 Powers from Manhattan.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Great. Thank you.  
21 Thank you for the testimony. Just a few question.  
22 Mr. Gunn, you just had a number-- wanted to just ask  
23 you if you could repeat on the-- I think it was fur  
24 stores in the city. Can you repeat that number?

25

2 TIM GUNN: In the 19 seventies, there  
3 were 450 for storefronts in New York.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: And that means a  
5 store that is exclusively selling for or what is the  
6 definition?

7 TIM GUNN: Exclusively, I can't say.  
8 It's a number that I got from-- one second. Great  
9 Fur New York.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. Great.  
11 Thanks. And presumably there are other businesses  
12 that are selling it as part of their variety of  
13 things, as well. Dr. Jefferson, you had a point  
14 about leather that I wanted to just ask a follow-up  
15 question on which was the sort of byproduct nature of  
16 the, you know, that's been raised-- and I think  
17 we're going to hear testimony, as well, from folks  
18 around sheep skin and other forms like cow hide in  
19 terms of why it might be exclu-- why leather might be  
20 excluded from it. You know, same definition applies.  
21 I was wondering if there were comments on whether  
22 that should be an allowable form of-- or not-- or  
23 what the opinion is in terms of other sort of items  
24 that might also serve as byproducts.

2 EILEEN JEFFERSON: Do you mean fur as a  
3 byproduct?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: No. I think you  
5 made the point that leather-- why the sep-- The  
6 difference between fur and leather here was that  
7 leather had been used for other purposes and was a  
8 byproduct. And I think that argument has been raised  
9 around like sheepskin and other-- I think other  
10 forms, as well. Wondering if you see if those as  
11 comparable examples or--

12 EILEEN JEFFERSON: I do. Sheepskin would  
13 be a different product altogether because those are  
14 domesticated farmed animals as opposed to wild  
15 animals being farmed.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Good. I guess the  
17 question is if there was-- If the Council is  
18 considering an exemption around that, whether you  
19 thought that was a reasonable exception in the sense  
20 that there is-- I think it's going to be raised  
21 early, so I'm just asking the question.

22 EILEEN JEFFERSON: Yes. We would consider  
23 that separate from fur.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. And  
3 then, in terms of the-- I think it's Mr. Catcher.  
4 Is that right? Okay.

5 JOSHUA CATCHER: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: In terms of the  
7 conversion of the industry that exists today, people  
8 who are selling it, maybe those 40 or something  
9 storefronts that are selling it right now. I mean,  
10 obvi-- You noted this, as well, and Mr. Gunn, as  
11 well, that there would be some time to convert. It  
12 would not mean if we were, essentially, asking a  
13 business to shut down in 90 days or reconvert and 90  
14 days, I just wonder, what are the industries that you  
15 feel like that would be translatable, I guess, today  
16 who is in that business and how-- and what would the  
17 skill sets and the conversion needed. If the city  
18 needed to put any of their workforce development or  
19 water the convertible skill sets if we were asking an  
20 industry that changed today from one material to  
21 another?

22 JOSHUA CATCHER: I think you for the  
23 question. I don't believe that there is that much of  
24 a skill set difference. There is maybe one or two  
25 things that are very, very specific. But as far as

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

51

2 patterning and so weighing in merchandising and  
3 draping, these are people that are already making  
4 coats that have other materials on them. They know  
5 how to make-- Some of their linings are-- They're  
6 working with polyester. They're working with cotton.  
7 They are working with these materials already, so  
8 it's not that they don't know how to use these  
9 materials. I believe there should be opportunities  
10 and incentives to how bring profitable and exciting  
11 innovative materials into all producers in the New  
12 York City garment district and all fashion makers in  
13 New York City. I think from an over arcing  
14 perspective, the entire industry should have more  
15 access to the most cutting-edge high tech,  
16 sustainable, and ethical materials and I don't  
17 believe-- I do believe there should be-- There is a  
18 case for a transition period, but this isn't training  
19 somebody who is a coalminer to make wind turbines.  
20 It's not a completely different technology. It is  
21 very similar.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Great. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. I'm  
24 going to call it the next person. Thank you.

25 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you all.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

55

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: We have Mark Oten,  
3 the CEO of International Fur Federation, Stephen  
4 Humphries, International Fur Federation, and excuse  
5 me if I miss pronounce your name. We have Bezelelel  
6 Stem. Stern. Sorry. Clayton Bexstead from the Fur  
7 Commission.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, Sergeant. We  
9 can begin. Just start whenever you would like. Just  
10 make sure your mic is on. The red light on your mic.

11 STEPHEN HUMPHRIES: Good afternoon--

12 MARK OTEN: I think--

13 STEPHEN HUMPHRIES: Council members.  
14 My name is Stephen Humphries. I am an attorney with  
15 the law firm of Kelly, Dryer, and Morin here in the  
16 city and I am here representing the International Fur  
17 Federation and The Fur Information Council of  
18 America. Although subject to city and state  
19 environmental review laws, such as the SEEKER and  
20 SEEKRA, the Council is not released, at this time,  
21 and environmental assessment of the fur ban. If the  
22 city Council proceeds with this bill, it must comply  
23 with those requirements and take a, quote, hard look  
24 at the potential impacts of its action. Pursuant to  
25 SEEKRA and the state equivalent, SEEKRA, where an

2 action has the potential to result in even one  
3 significant impact, of full environmental impact  
4 statement, or EIS, must be prepared. Here, the  
5 proposed bill has the potential to result in at least  
6 three types of significant environmental impacts. I  
7 will briefly review those impacts. First, regarding  
8 socioeconomic conditions. According to the city's  
9 environmental review guidelines set forth in the  
10 SEEKRA technical manual, and action would result in a  
11 significant impact if it would substantially impair  
12 the ability of an industry or category of businesses  
13 to continue operating within the city. Given that  
14 the bill would cause for sellers, wholesalers, and  
15 manufacturers to shut down or relocate to outside of  
16 the city, the bill would result in significant  
17 socioeconomic impact. As such, an EIS must be  
18 prepared to identify, assess, and disclose those  
19 impacts. And to develop mitigation measures and to  
20 consider alternatives. Second, regarding  
21 neighborhood character. According to the SEEKRA  
22 technical manual, and action would result in a  
23 significant impact where it would significantly  
24 change one of the defining elements of a  
25 neighborhood. By closing the ground-floor

2 storefronts and for related businesses that define  
3 the fur district, the bill would result in a  
4 significant impact to neighborhood character. Again,  
5 and EIS needs to be prepared to identify, assess, and  
6 disclose those impacts. As well as develop  
7 mitigation measures and consider alternatives.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Sir?

9 STEPHEN HUMPHRIES: Yes?

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I want-- We're going to  
11 have questions for you, so I'm going to move--

12 STEPHEN HUMPHRIES: Sure.

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: on to the next panelist,  
14 but we will come back and you can expound on your  
15 points longer. So, you're not on, that were going to  
16 move on the next folks and were going to go back for  
17 questions and you can continue to expand on your  
18 arguments on the environmental assessment that you  
19 believe is needed.

20 STEPHEN HUMPHRIES: Thank you.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

22 Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and  
23 committee. My name is Mark Oten. I am the chief  
24 executive of the International Fur Federation. We're  
25 the organization that represents the fur industry and

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

50

2 over 50 countries around the globe and I actually  
3 welcome, Mr. Speaker, some of the measures that you  
4 are trying to achieve because our business is also  
5 keen to make sure that we have a proper, regulated  
6 for industry and I hope that we can enter a dialogue  
7 with you here in New York to be able to achieve some  
8 of those aims. The fur trade is worth over 33  
9 billion dollars and it is a growing and vibrant  
10 trade. Unlike some of the testament we heard early  
11 on, young people are working and endorsing for and,  
12 here in New York, fur is sold, yes, still in the  
13 garment district, but actually way beyond the garment  
14 district. It is sold from stores such as Barney's  
15 and Bloomingdale's. It is sold on the Internet. And  
16 it is a vibrant firm business here in New York. Not  
17 dying at all. From Canada goose to Uggs, to Fendy,  
18 Louis Vuitton, New Yorkers are buying for and have  
19 been doing it for decades and want to continue to do  
20 so. The next generation are designing fur. It's on  
21 the catwalks here at New York fashion week and around  
22 the globe. A ban proposed this way would stop the  
23 freedom of those designers from being able to use for  
24 and, more importantly, stop consumers here in New  
25 York from buying further they want to buy. At a time

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

5a

2 when many of us are concerned about the environmental  
3 impacts on society, makes no sense to deny consumers  
4 the opportunity to buy a truly natural material  
5 rather than pushing them towards the fake plastic  
6 alternatives. For bio degrades. It does not end up  
7 in landfill and to answer a point made earlier on,  
8 100 percent of the fire which comes from wild  
9 trapping is part of conservation project. Fact.  
10 News of what is happening in New York has spread  
11 around the globe and we are in conversations now with  
12 countries such as Denmark and Finland and Greece  
13 about the WTO implications of what takes place. Mr.  
14 Speaker, hope you will be prepared to sit down with  
15 me and look at a solution. We would like to see New  
16 York become the first city to introduce Fur Mark, a  
17 proper, independent, scientific-based certification  
18 program guaranteed that the fire sold here in New  
19 York is from the most regulated fire that we can have  
20 in the globe and I hope we can meet to discuss that  
21 in the weeks ahead. Thank you.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you, mister. And  
23 I have some questions on Fur Mark, but I want to let  
24 the other two panelist speak first and then I'm happy

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING  
2 to have some conversation about that with you. Thank  
3 you for being here.

4 BETELE STERN: Good afternoon. My name  
5 is Betele Stern, also of Kelly, Dryer, and Morin  
6 which represents IFF, FICA, and Fur Commission USA.  
7 We believe the legislation--

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Pull the mic a little  
9 bit closer to you. Thank you.

10 BETELE STERN: Sure. We believe the  
11 proposed legislation is bad policy, but it's also  
12 unconstitutional. I noticed, Mr. Speaker, that when  
13 you summarize the legislation, you didn't talk about  
14 the religious custom exception. Believe that--

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: It's in the bill.

16 BETELE STERN: I know, but the religion  
17 custom exception violates the establishment clause.  
18 So--

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I just want to be clear.  
20 We added it to the bill, so I'm not sure what  
21 inference you are trying to make by mean not  
22 mentioning it. There was a lot I didn't mention,  
23 which is why we have a back and forth to talk about  
24 these things.

25 BETELE STERN: Sure.

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But the bill includes a  
3 religious exemption. So I'm not sure what you're  
4 trying to infer with that comment, but you may  
5 continue.

6 BETELE STERN: Thank you. The Supreme  
7 Court in Lemon V. Kurtzman explained that for a law  
8 to not run afoul of the establishment clause, a  
9 principal or primary effect must be one that neither  
10 advances nor inhibit religion and the statute must  
11 not foster an excessive government entanglement with  
12 religion. The proposed law fails to meet this test.  
13 By excluding for apparel that is worn as a matter of  
14 religious custom from its otherwise comprehensive ban  
15 on new furs, the laws primary effect is to advance  
16 religion by allowing the purchase and use of new furs  
17 for religious purposes only. Furthermore, by  
18 acknowledging that the fur being exempted is worn by  
19 some Jews not as a matter of religious obligation,  
20 but only as a matter of religious custom, the law  
21 wrongly advances the interest of a particular group  
22 of Jews even though the proposed law acknowledges  
23 that there is no halalic requirement for Jews to wear  
24 furs. In 1994, an overturning New York legislation  
25 providing special privileges to religious groups, the

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

62

2 Supreme Court explained that proper respect for both  
3 the free exercise and the establishment clause  
4 compels the state to pursue a clause of neutrality  
5 towards religion favoring neither one religion over  
6 the others were religious adherents collectively over  
7 nonadherence. Furthermore, by excluding for apparel  
8 as a matter of religious custom from the ban, the  
9 proposed legislation will necessarily foster and an  
10 excessive government entanglement with religion,  
11 which is exactly what the Supreme Court in Lemon V.  
12 Kurtzman prescribed against. Thank you.

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you for your  
14 analysis.

15 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: I'm Clayton Bexstead. I  
16 am a fourth generation mink rancher and I am against  
17 the fur ban for many reasons. Just like my father  
18 taught me, I am in the process of teaching my son  
19 about the importance of treating animals with the  
20 utmost care and respect. As a rancher, I know how  
21 vital it is that these animals receive the best  
22 possible care every day. We are strictly regulated  
23 under the Fur Commission USA certification program  
24 that ensures the best practices. Under these  
25 mandated guidelines, the animal's welfare, comfort,

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

62

2 and well-being always come first. Freshwater sources  
3 and finest food ingredients are always readily  
4 available to ensure a comfortable and healthy  
5 lifestyle for the animals. The animals are cared for  
6 in a clean, organic environment that is regularly  
7 inspected and regulated. I watched my grandfather  
8 and dad spend a lifetime on the farm from sun up to  
9 sun down caring for the animals and now my family and  
10 I dedicating our lives to ensuring the same top-  
11 quality life for our animals. Ranchers dedicate  
12 their lives to giving their animals a quality life.  
13 Do the right thing and don't kill a multigenerational  
14 family business.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you for being  
16 here. Mr. Oten, I have some questions for you on Fur  
17 Mark. So, you had mentioned Fur Mark. You mentioned  
18 you thought this would be an opportunity for the city  
19 of New York to do something that other municipalities  
20 of not done, other countries have not done. We saw  
21 that the ban went forward in West Hollywood and San  
22 Francisco and in Los Angeles. Other countries around  
23 the world have not done full bans, but have tried to  
24 further regulate fur farming and other measures.  
25 What you'd mentioned in your testimony and what I

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

61

2 think other furriers have come to me with is this  
3 idea called Fur Mark which, jump in when I'm done  
4 with this, correct me if I get anything wrong. The  
5 information I have says that Fur Mark will be a self-  
6 regulated Global program, as I understand it,  
7 oversight and enforcement sounds like a huge task  
8 that would require a significant amount of resources  
9 to be able to do about enforcement and that oversight  
10 is part is what is being formulated as part of Fur  
11 Mark. And I want to understand who would be  
12 responsible for generating the standards under the  
13 program. Who would create those standards and how  
14 well fur farms and trappers be held accountable if  
15 they deviate from the standards that get set up?

16 MARK OTEN: Okay. Very directly, the  
17 program is not been devised by the industry. It's  
18 being devised by independent scientists. So they  
19 have been sent away and they have come up with what  
20 they believed to be the best welfare standards,  
21 whether it's to do with farming or to do with  
22 trapping, or indeed dressing and dying. The second  
23 part of the process is that all of this has to  
24 independently assessed. So, again, the entity does  
25 not do this. It is assessed by private companies

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

65

2 that are brought in on contract. On a farm, for  
3 example, there would be three independent assessments  
4 each year. To answer your last point, if somebody  
5 fails to actually meet those criteria, they are  
6 banned from being able to sell goods in the fur  
7 industry. They will not be part of Fur Mark.  
8 Absolutely, crystal-clear.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And have those standards  
10 been created yet on what--

11 MARK OTEN: Yes.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: what is acceptable and  
13 what's unacceptable?

14 MARK OTEN: So, the program is under  
15 pilot at the moment. We are ready to launch January,  
16 the 1st. We've been developing this program with the  
17 two big fashion groups, LVMH and Caring. So, they  
18 have major fashion houses in it. We've got buy-in,  
19 for example from Galeries Lafayette in Paris who are  
20 going to go Fur Mark only. What we would love you to  
21 do is to be the first city to actually say, okay. We  
22 want to balance animal welfare with consumer freedom  
23 and I genuinely believe Fur Mark is a way that we  
24 could sit down and create that freedom, but gave you

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 66

2 the reassurances you need about where the fur comes  
3 from and make sure that it is ethically sourced.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And, Mr. Oten, you just  
5 said that the inspections what happened three times a  
6 year?

7 MARK OTEN: On the farms, it's three  
8 times a year. When it comes to the trapping, the  
9 regulation is different because, obviously, you have  
10 to make said that the chops I checked and inspected  
11 within the 24 hour period after the trapping takes  
12 place. So there is whether it talking about wild  
13 over whether you are talking about farmed. Each one  
14 is for spoke to make sure that it's done for the high  
15 standards for that particular type of firm.

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I mean this with total  
17 sincerity. How is there a humane and ethical way to  
18 trap an animal?

19 MARK OTEN: Well--

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And I really mean that.  
21 Explain to me what a humane and ethical way-- walk  
22 me through that because I don't understand that.

23 MARK OTEN: You will hear from  
24 scientists. I hope is they get called later on to  
25 explain exactly how the trapping is put in place.

2 Obviously, because 100 percent of these animals are  
3 trapped for conservation, we work to government, not  
4 ours, government quotas and guidelines on how the  
5 trapping takes place. Those traps are  
6 internationally approved. We sign up to  
7 international conventions on [inaudible 01:13:45] for  
8 example, on which animals can be trapped. All of  
9 those traps have to be approved not by us, but by  
10 international government agreements. And I know we  
11 talked earlier about misinformation on both sides.  
12 That is transparent. You can read those guidelines.  
13 They are thoroughly checked, inspected, and they are  
14 humane in terms of the way the animals are trapped.  
15 I do not recognize Dan's demonstration earlier on as  
16 the industry that I work in income from.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But those traps exist  
18 and they're used.

19 MARK OTEN: They will-- There is  
20 absolutely no way those traps can be used as part of  
21 Fur Mark and--

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Not as Fur  
23 Mark, but they currently exist outside of Fur Mark.  
24 We're talking about Fur Mark as a new standard that  
25 you think that we should use and other government

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

62

2 should use forward. But currently these type of  
3 traps do exist to trap animals and menus their fur?

4 MARK OTEN: I am not aware of that  
5 taking place in America. I stand to be corrected,  
6 but I am not aware of that--

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Not in  
8 America, but in other places around the world?

9 MARK OTEN: As Dan s--

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Russia? China?

11 MARK OTEN: As Dan said himself, 100  
12 countries have actually banned those traps and I  
13 welcome that.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. So, as part of  
15 the standards you are talking about in New York  
16 State, as I mentioned in my opening remarks,  
17 electrocution of furbearing animals is not lawful in  
18 the state of New York. It was banned a few years  
19 ago. Would pelts from electrocuted animals be  
20 certified under Fur Mark?

21 MARK OTEN: Yes. Because land-based and  
22 on independent science. And so it's not for me to  
23 come in and judge that. The EU, for example, has  
24 this as the most ethical and humane standard. That  
25 electrocution is the quickest, fastest, and best way

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING  
2 to euthanize an animal. It's not something we set.  
3 It's something the EU has independently assessed and,  
4 again, got a 30 page document I can share with you  
5 which sets out exactly why they believe that is the  
6 humane embarrassed way to euthanize.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Electrocuting animals?

8 MARK OTEN: It is tested by scientists.  
9 Welfare experts.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] It  
11 doesn't make you uncomfortable? Electrocuting  
12 animals?

13 MARK OTEN: What would make me  
14 uncomfortable is me deciding rather than a scientist  
15 deciding. I put my faith in independent scientists  
16 and welfare experts. That always has to be the thing  
17 to do in my judgment. Both you and I are laymen when  
18 it comes to this issue. We have to trust the  
19 experts.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And we-- We just--

21 MARK OTEN: And I'm very happy to have  
22 those experts--

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yeah. But--

24 MARK OTEN: give evidence and cross-  
25 examine them.

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: We just-- I understand.  
3 We heard from a medical expert. We heard from a  
4 doctor who spoke on the previous panel, veterinarian  
5 who specializes in the treatment of animals and she  
6 doesn't feel comfortable, I think, with what you're  
7 saying. So I don't think there is a singular  
8 threshold. You may have one scientist that says one  
9 thing and there are plenty of other scientists who  
10 wouldn't think that that is the appropriate standards  
11 to use.

12 MARK OTEN: And I think sometimes you're  
13 going to have some vets and scientists that just  
14 don't believe that animals should be use this  
15 purpose. So there will be against whatever method it  
16 is that is used to euthanize. What I'm talking about  
17 is the independent experts who have said, look, this  
18 is the kindest, the fairest, the best way to  
19 euthanize. And, as I said, based on science and I'm  
20 really happy to share that science.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So--

22 MARK OTEN: If there's alternative  
23 science, let's look at that, as well.

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So when other killing  
25 methods are allowed under Fur Mark. What-- If you

2 could give me a list of what is allowed under Fur  
3 Mark to kill animals.

4 MARK OTEN: Okay. So we base it on, as I  
5 said, the scientific evidence. The mink are  
6 euthanized and then around five seconds from being  
7 taken from the cage and then put into a box where  
8 they are cast. That is around five seconds. They're  
9 not transported anywhere. I've you've heard, for the  
10 fox, that is electrocution as being the best and most  
11 humane method. And then, as we talked about for the  
12 trapped for, that will be different kinds of approved  
13 traps which will be bespoke for the different animals  
14 that are trapped in different ways. So for each  
15 species, it's different and it's based, again, on the  
16 scientific evidence that we are given.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So what about for  
18 coyotes?

19 MARK OTEN: For coyotes, that would be  
20 trapping, as well. That would be-- They're not  
21 euthanized by electricity or gassed. That is a  
22 trapped breed. And that is done in Canada and in  
23 America and you'll hear from our trapping experts  
24 later on that it is highly inspected by the  
25 government, the wildlife authorities in Canada and

2 America and it's been developed over-- for decades  
3 of expertise on humane trapping.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So I just want to read  
5 from you, this is the finished code of good practice  
6 for humane killing in foxes. This is what the code  
7 says from Finland on what they consider to be the  
8 good practice of-- it's part of the Fur Mark--

9 MARK OTEN: Yeah.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: standard. And this is  
11 what it says. Quote, the position of the electrodes,  
12 the shape of the electrodes, and the pressure used to  
13 hold electrodes affect the efficacy of electrocution.  
14 It has been found that when one electrode is placed  
15 properly inside the rectum and one is bitten by the  
16 fox, the current passes through the fox properly.  
17 The rod electrode should be placed sufficiently deep  
18 in the rectum and firmly into the mouth. The current  
19 induced epileptic seizures in the brain and  
20 fibrillation and cardiac arrest in the heart. It  
21 should be checked that the restraining device or  
22 other materials in contact with the fox do not affect  
23 the path or effectiveness of the current flow. Many  
24 physiological properties affect the current flow,  
25 such as body size. Therefore, the voltage and

2 amperage should be sufficiently high for the current  
3 to overcome the body resistance of even the largest  
4 of foxes. So you-- Do you agree with that standard?  
5 That's what-- It's part of what the Fur Mark  
6 standard is?

7 MARK OTEN: That is part of the EU  
8 standard and it's part of the welfare standard, which  
9 will be part of Fur Mark and that, as I said, is  
10 based on the scientific evidence of the most humane  
11 way to do it. Of course, for many people, the detail  
12 of how any animal is put down--

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] How do you  
14 define humane?

15 MARK OTEN: I define it by-- based on  
16 the vets and the scientists who have--

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] But we--

18 MARK OTEN: years of experience.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: We just agreed that  
20 there is not a singular standard. That vets and  
21 scientists don't all agree on this. So I'm asking  
22 for you, which vets and scientist-- What is your  
23 person comfortability standard on how to humanely  
24 treat an animal, kill an animal for the purposes of  
25 fur?

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

7A

2 MARK OTEN: I think whenever I'm looking  
3 at an animal which is slaughtered for meat or whether  
4 it's an animal slaughtered for part of leather or  
5 whatever purpose, the number one consideration and  
6 concern I have is has that animal suffered and has it  
7 been treated humanely and I wouldn't do this job--  
8 honestly would not do this job so I was confident  
9 that this industry operates 10 that high standard.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Do you think they're  
11 curr-- Do you think the industry is currently  
12 operating on that standard?

13 MARK OTEN: I believe that it is, but I  
14 want to make sure that I do more and I push harder  
15 and that's why I passionately want to see--

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Mark--

17 MARK OTEN: Fur Mark introduced--

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: If we're going--

19 MARK OTEN: because I want to have--

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: to have an honest  
21 conversation--

22 MARK OTEN: Sure.

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: you think that the  
24 industry currently is?

25 MARK OTEN: Yes.

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Why are you proposing  
3 this if you think it's what the industry currently  
4 is?

5 MARK OTEN: Because I want to move  
6 further because, at the moment, a lot of the  
7 inspections are done by governments and I actually  
8 want to reach a higher threshold. I want to bring in  
9 scientists, independent.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Okay.  
11 Could you be a little self-reflective and tell me  
12 what you could be doing better to treat animals?

13 MARK OTEN: I think the issue is around  
14 the inspection. I think we need to have more  
15 inspection and the second issue--

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] No animals  
17 in this industry are mistreated?

18 MARK OTEN: No. I don't believe that  
19 animals are mistreated in this industry. I believe  
20 that what we need to do, however, is to have a better  
21 way of demonstrating to you, to give you confidence,  
22 and consumers, that we can trace and track exactly  
23 where those animals have come from, which trapping  
24 line and which farm and to give reassurance that the  
25 best possible welfare has been put in place. Look,

2 science always changes. There are always new methods  
3 and we want to make sure we're at the cutting edge of  
4 all of that, whether that's to do with the kind of  
5 feed used, the kind of cage used, the kind of water  
6 that is given to the animals. I'm never, ever going  
7 to rest and say this is enough. We've always got to  
8 push further and find better methods.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So--

10 MARK OTEN: That's always possible with  
11 science.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But traps don't  
13 discriminate. If you lay a trap, any animal could  
14 walk into that trap, right?

15 MARK OTEN: Again, you'll hear from the  
16 trapping experts. I'm not one, so I'm not going to  
17 give you a misinformation, but they are designed  
18 specifically for the certain animals they are trying  
19 to capture and are not, therefore, designed to  
20 capture the wrong animal. But the trapping experts  
21 will give you the details on how that works.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So--

23 MARK OTEN: I'm not the expert. I'm not  
24 going to answer a question where I don't have my  
25 facts.

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I mean, that seems a  
3 little convenient given that you're up here  
4 representing--

5 MARK OTEN: It's just an honest-- I've  
6 said to you all along I want to base--

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] If  
8 you're--

9 MARK OTEN: it on facts.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: here to represent--

11 MARK OTEN: Let's get the people to have  
12 the facts.

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: If you're here to  
14 represent the International Fur Federation and you're  
15 talking about Fur Mark, these are questions that you  
16 should be able to answer.

17 MARK OTEN: And what--

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: You shouldn't-- If you  
19 don't feel comfortable, then say, I don't want to  
20 answer the question. But don't pass it off to other  
21 people. You're up there as the chief spokesperson--

22 MARK OTEN: Uh-hm.

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Here at the New York  
24 City Council for the International Fur Federation and  
25 putting forward a new standard. So, if you don't--

2 You can't say, well, someone else has the expertise.

3 You are here proposing something. If you're coming  
4 to testify in front of this body, have the expertise  
5 to speak on it.

6 MARK OTEN: Mr. Speaker, I am very  
7 confident about what we're doing in relation to  
8 traps. You asked me a direct question about whether  
9 the traps work for every single animal--

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So they do discriminate.  
11 The traps are figured out-- They are designed in a  
12 way where, if a trap is made for a coyote and a cat  
13 steps in the trap, the cat's not going to get hurt.  
14 It was only designed for the coyote.

15 MARK OTEN: That is exactly what I am  
16 saying to you, but if you want the details on how  
17 that works-- [background comments] if you want the  
18 detail on how that works, we have some greedy experts  
19 coming to give you--

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay.

21 MARK OTEN: all of that data.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So scientists have found  
23 that death by gas is painful for mink. You said that  
24 minks are gassed. You said it takes five seconds  
25 between the cage and the gassing of the minks and

2 they found that it's not immediate. It induces  
3 seizures and it's not as effective as a means of  
4 inducing death such as animals that are skinned  
5 alive. What alternatives to gassing are there?

6 MARK OTEN: Well, skinning alive is  
7 absolutely something that does not happen in the fur  
8 trade and I'm appalled to hear some of the  
9 misinformation that goes around. Why would that be  
10 something that anybody would do? It's abhorrent.  
11 It's disgusting. And there is absolutely no way this  
12 happens in this industry.

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] So what  
14 about video?

15 MARK OTEN: And I won't--

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Are the videos fake  
17 videos?

18 MARK OTEN: I'm more than happy to share  
19 with you that affidavit that we have from the  
20 individuals involved who made that film who has  
21 claimed that it is fake video and that this was a one  
22 off and they were paid to do that. And I can share  
23 with you all those affidavits that they have made.  
24 Skinning alive does not happen in this industry.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2

3 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] So, what  
4 are the other alternative methods to gassing?

5 MARK OTEN: So, gassing is the most he  
6 made method. That is the method that we've been told  
7 by the scientists in the welfare of experts is the  
8 best way for mink. It is the kindest way because  
9 they are literally dead within five seconds from  
10 leaving the cage to going into the gas and euthanize  
11 box.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Animal welfare experts  
13 suggest that even farmed animals require a meaningful  
14 amount of space to roam and that animals like mink,  
15 which are semi-aquatic, need water to first sell  
16 their basic instincts that they are born with. In  
17 other countries like the UK, fur farming has been  
18 banned because the basic needs of animals cannot be  
19 met in farming conditions. So what conditions are  
20 provided to Fox and meeting con for farms to give  
21 them the ability to behave naturally?

22 MARK OTEN: So, within the Fur Mark  
23 standards, there is a list of 22 different  
24 assessments. These assessments cover checks to see  
25 whether the animals are naturally happy and their  
behavioral measures. I've been and seen what these

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 21

2 different checks are. It's important to make sure,  
3 obviously, there is flowing water all the time, that  
4 they have forms of entertainment to look after  
5 themselves within the cage. These are all set out  
6 and checked against a set of criteria and the  
7 inspectors will go around and they will look at the  
8 behavior of the animals to make sure that they are  
9 behaving normally and without any disquiet within the  
10 cages.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: How big are the cages?

12 MARK OTEN: The cages vary when it's  
13 between mink and between [inaudible 01:25:43} raccoon  
14 and between Chinchilla and between Fox news. So  
15 that--

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: How big is a fox cage?

17 MARK OTEN: I would have to turn to one  
18 of the farmers on the actual sizing on the fox cages.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And are animals caged  
20 together or separately?

21 MARK OTEN: They're caged together, but  
22 there is a limit on the amount of animals that can be  
23 together because, when they are breeding and when  
24 they are having their kids or their pumps, they have  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2

3 to, obviously, being together at that process. At  
4 that point.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Studies have shown that  
6 for farming, in particular the maneuver produced from  
7 the farmed animals has serious and harmful  
8 consequences for local ecosystems. If you could tell  
9 me about your efforts, if any, to minimize the local  
10 ecological effects of for farming.

11 MARK OTEN: Okay. So we're just  
12 completing what we call a lifecycle analysis, which  
13 looks at the impact of fur on the climate. It is  
14 true, and certainly is one of the speakers said  
15 earlier on that there are omissions that come from a  
16 farm, but that is count turned off by the fact that  
17 we are able to use byproducts from the farm so that  
18 the mink byproduct will go into composting,  
19 fertilizer. And so, there is an offset there. There  
20 is also an offset because a lot of waste food is  
21 actually the food which is used to feed the mink. So  
22 the scientists have looked at the impact as to  
23 whether it is negative or positive and because our  
24 product is not something which is thrown away and  
25 goes into landfill within two or three years, it's  
generally normally a 10 to 15 year life cycle that

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 22

2 people will have a fur coat for, often passing it on  
3 to a generation. That environmental impact is spread  
4 out over 15 year period, so we are very confident to  
5 say that when you compare it to, say, fake fur, weak,  
6 out much, much better in terms of the environmental  
7 impact.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And you said that you  
9 believe that fur is a very sustainable product.

10 MARK OTEN: A natural and sustainable  
11 product. Yes.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And what about chromium?

13 MARK OTEN: So, we do, obviously, with  
14 the dressing and dying process, put in coloring and  
15 that is something where there are regulations, again,  
16 coming in under Fur Mark. So we will have an  
17 approved list of chemicals. There will be inspectors  
18 coming in to check those approved a list of chemicals  
19 being used. These will all be reach compliance.

20 Reaches the international standard for the chemicals  
21 that can be used, but I would like to go further and  
22 see if we can start to be able to introduce more  
23 natural bays dies in the dressing and dying process,  
24 as well. The address same part is nonchemical base.  
25 It's using salt and water. Obviously, the dying bit

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 21

2 is where you bring the chemicals then and they are  
3 set against an approved list and independently  
4 inspected.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But would you consider  
6 chromium and formaldehyde to be sustainable, natural  
7 products?

8 MARK OTEN: No. Those individual  
9 chemicals themselves, you would not call natural.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But they are part of--  
11 They are part of the fur industry.

12 MARK OTEN: They are part of the fur  
13 industry and they are part of the dressing and dying  
14 process.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And going to go away or  
16 you going to use something else besides them? Could  
17 we get rid of formaldehyde and chromium?

18 MARK OTEN: I think over time we can.  
19 Yes. We can move-- We are certainly working already  
20 at the moment with natural dyes and we're looking at  
21 that. We need to do there, honestly, is to have the  
22 fashion industry work with us closer because they are  
23 often the ones that--

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] The  
25 fashion industry is moving away from fur.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 25

3 MARK OTEN: Well, actually, a lot of the  
4 brands are still working with for. LVMH Group and  
5 Caring Group who own many, many of the large fashion  
6 brands have been developing this with us. They are  
7 talking to us about how we can work with some more  
8 natural bays dies to come in for the process. So,  
9 yeah. I'm definitely keen to do that.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But why-- why do you  
11 think, Mark, that Stella McCartney and Donna Karen  
12 and Donatello Versace and Diane von Furstenberg and  
13 timberlands and the list goes on, every major fashion  
14 designer-- Not every. Most of them have all moved  
15 away from fur. They have all said-- I mean, I'm  
16 getting letters from these major designers in New  
17 York City who are telling me, I know the industry. I  
18 have worked in people like Tim Gunn and people like  
19 Tim Gunn saying, we've studied this. We know about  
20 it. It is inhumane. It is cruel. There are other  
21 ways to do this. The fashion industry is moving away  
22 from the firm. Maybe you saying consumers aren't,  
23 but industry leaders are. Why do you think they are  
24 doing that? Why do you think Donatello Versace and  
25 Donna Karen and Diane von Furstenberg are saying we  
no longer want to use fur?

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2

3 MARK OTEN: I think they've made a  
4 choice--

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Why?

6 MARK OTEN: And I respect their choices.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Why do you think they  
8 made that choice?

9 MARK OTEN: I think that there is-- I  
10 mean, some of these statements they've made around  
11 giving up far were very odd to me because they said  
12 they wanted to become more sustainable and I find it  
13 odd that they are actually switching to more fake  
14 plastic--

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But they also talked  
16 about cruelty.

17 MARK OTEN: Well, that's a personal-- I  
18 mean, we come back to a-- You know, maybe this whole  
19 debate is framed around that. Personal choice.  
20 Personal decisions. Donatello and Stella McCartney--

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] I don't  
22 think it's personal choice.

23 MARK OTEN: [inaudible 01:30:26]

24 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I think it's living in a  
25 humane society. I think it's not about personal

2 choice. I think it's about how do we treat other  
3 sentient beings--

4 MARK OTEN: But this is--

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: that have feelings and  
6 we've made decisions over the years on understanding  
7 that elephants have deep grief and that we don't want  
8 to sell ivory, import ivory, in a way for the killing  
9 of elephants to incentivize it. We make these  
10 decisions as we evolve as a society on how to treat  
11 other sentient beings.

12 MARK OTEN: But, Mr. Speaker, we also  
13 have a principle of individual choice and so for the  
14 Donatello's that have decided to ban it, the Louis  
15 Vuitton, the Fendy's, the Canada Goose, the Uggs and  
16 others are still choosing to carry on. And I guess  
17 what I would love to see here is a way and which, if  
18 New Yorkers wanted fur ban, they would just stop  
19 buying it. They wouldn't be going to Macy's and  
20 Bloomingdale's and Barney's. They wouldn't be going  
21 to the garment district. They wouldn't be buying  
22 Canada Goose. They wouldn't be applying these  
23 products, but they are buying them in large numbers  
24 and it's about-- [background comment] it's about an  
25 issue of choice. I totally respect the speakers here

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING  
2 who don't want to buy for, but chose to allow me and  
3 my colleagues--

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] I-- I--

5 MARK OTEN: the chance to buy it.

6 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I have a question for  
7 you on that. Does that mean that we should allow the  
8 choice of ivory?

9 MARK OTEN: No. I think, on the issue of  
10 ivory, that there are difficult ethical issues for me  
11 on that and--

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Should we  
13 allow the choice of tiger skin?

14 MARK OTEN: No. For me, personally, I  
15 wouldn't wish to.

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Then, what's the  
17 difference? That's choice.

18 MARK OTEN: It is choice--

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: If the market decided,  
20 and the market has decided in the past-- there is a  
21 market for ivory.

22 MARK OTEN: And there's a--

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So should we allow that  
24 choice?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

oa

2 MARK OTEN: There's a fascinate--

3 There's a fascinate--

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Should we  
5 allow that choice for ivory?

6 MARK OTEN: No. I don't believe in that  
7 case--

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Why not?  
9 What's the difference?

10 MARK OTEN: Because the threshold that  
11 you arrive at, as a politician--

12 [Background comments]

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

14 MARK OTEN: There's a threshold you  
15 arrive at politician, I believe, where you have to  
16 take a judgment as to whether or not you feel the  
17 evidence is overwhelming in favor of a ban or  
18 overwhelming in favor of regulation and freedom of  
19 choice. On this issue, I don't believe it is  
20 overwhelming. I think there is compelling arguments  
21 on both sides and I would like to see the solution of  
22 having it regulated to allow that choice, but also  
23 reaching the concerns that you and many of your  
24 committee have about making sure the industry is  
25 ethical and properly regulated. I think both things

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING  
2 can be done and you, as a politician, are in the  
3 business of making things happen. I know you're  
4 frustrated too. This is the way in which we can do  
5 rather than ending up with [inaudible 01:32:47], with  
6 WTO, and all those kinds of things. Let's do this  
7 together and make a difference.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But if this is about  
9 choice and transparency and education, there's been a  
10 tremendous amount, and this is factual, of false  
11 labeling in the fur industry. So that's not about  
12 choice if you're giving people bad information. They  
13 don't get to make an accurate choice if things are  
14 mislabeled.

15 MARK OTEN: And when you ask me, Mark,  
16 what is different-- What do you want to improve on?  
17 I want to improve on that. That's why Fur Mark will  
18 be a mark--

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] So if  
20 you're--

21 MARK OTEN: a stand--

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: going to be self-  
23 reflective, as I stated earlier, you would say that  
24 there is a problem on labeling?

25 MARK OTEN: I--

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

a1

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: There has been a problem  
3 on labeling?

4 MARK OTEN: I would say that we need to  
5 be not honor out labeling and giving consumers  
6 information. Absolutely. I acknowledge that.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, there has been a  
8 problem with labeling?

9 MARK OTEN: You're trying to make me say  
10 that there's a problem with labeling.

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: No. No. If you--

12 MARK OTEN: I--

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: If you don't believe  
14 there's a problem, say you don't think there's a  
15 problem.

16 MARK OTEN: There's a problem because we  
17 don't--

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: There's a problem.

19 MARK OTEN: We don't have clear labeling  
20 for products in New York in this country. We need  
21 to. Fur Mark is the solution to that. We could have  
22 a system where the individual retailers and shops  
23 have a Fur Mark labels showing consumers we were put  
24 in place in an inspection regime to make sure that  
25 every product being shown, having the Fur Mark label,

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING  
a?

2 we can trace back to make sure it really is from Fur  
3 Mark. So we could overcome the difficulty about  
4 labeling. Yes. I think we can.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Do you live in New York?  
6 Do you live in London? Do you live in the UK?

7 MARK OTEN: I feel an intruder here.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Sorry. I--

9 MARK OTEN: You can tell from my accent.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: The reason I'm asking is  
11 I want to ask about London. I read and correct me if  
12 I'm wrong. Some people told me this is bad  
13 information. That London is not allowing for on the  
14 runway for fashion week.

15 MARK OTEN: That is bad information. I  
16 met with Caroline Roche. She's--

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Because I  
18 just read an article in the Guardian. I googled it.  
19 It's right online right here where the newspaper in  
20 London says that for is not allowed on the runway  
21 anymore.

22 MARK OTEN: We can phone Caroline Roche  
23 who is the CEO of London fashion week and she will  
24 tell you that's absolutely not the case. I had  
25 breakfast with her a couple of months ago. She gave

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

o2

2 me an absolute guarantee that that is not the case,  
3 February which just went, for was shown at London  
4 fashion week. It is a myth. It is not true. You  
5 can speak to Caroline Roche yourself. I will give  
6 you her cell if you want.

7 [Background comments]

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, what-- [background  
10 comments] in New York City, for apparel waste would  
11 necessarily go to a landfill when it is finally  
12 disposed of because it can't be recycled or composted  
13 and a landfill would contribute to the uncontrolled  
14 release of methane and a release of toxins into the  
15 soil and groundwater. What programs, if any, are  
16 available to consumers to send their for apparel so  
17 that it may biodegrade in a manner that is not  
18 harmful to the environment given the chemicals and  
19 carcinogens that we talked about that are using?  
20 What biodegradable program are you proposing or  
21 currently exists?

22 MARK OTEN: Well, I mean, number one,  
23 very, very few people actually said in the first to  
24 landfills. It generally gets either passed down  
25 through the generations--

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

01

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: or repurposed.

3 MARK OTEN: or it gets re-- Exactly.

4 Remain. We just did some work in the Netherlands  
5 where we took natural fur and sent it to some labs  
6 and it started to biodegrade within 30 days and then  
7 we took some fake fur in the biodegradable process  
8 just doesn't begin. So, actually, our product does  
9 biodegrade. It doesn't end up in landfill. The one  
10 issue you raised in terms of the chemicals, yes.  
11 There is obviously a chemical issue, but that would  
12 be the same, whether you are talking about the fake  
13 fur on the natural fur.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Did you-- Mark, did you  
15 testify when Los Angeles was considering this a  
16 couple years ago?

17 MARK OTEN: No.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Did your organization  
19 testify against the bill in Los Angeles?

20 MARK OTEN: Oh, sorry. I thought you met  
21 me personally.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: No. Did your  
23 organization testify against the bill in Los Angeles?

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

as

2 MARK OTEN: Yeah. My colleagues from the  
3 American International Fur Federation attended both  
4 in San Francisco and in LA.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And my understanding is,  
6 in Los Angeles, it passed unanimous-- there was one  
7 no vote, but the entire counsel almost passed it  
8 there and I think they had extensive hearings like  
9 this to talk about the merits of it.

10 MARK OTEN: They did. But in Beverly  
11 Hills, the same process happened and so didn't pass  
12 it.

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: The International Fur  
14 Federation, are you all funded in any way by fur  
15 farms?

16 MARK OTEN: Yes. Completely. Yes. We  
17 are funded by a levy on every single scan that is  
18 sold. So, to that extent, we are receiving money  
19 from the industry and we are the industry  
20 representatives.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yeah.

22 MARK OTEN: We're not--

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] No. I  
24 just wasn't sure who made-- who you-- the Fur  
25 Federation, who you exactly represent--

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

ac

2 MARK OTEN: Yeah.

3 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And so you are  
4 represented predominantly, exclusively, by the fur  
5 farms themselves.

6 MARK OTEN: No. So we represent the fur  
7 farms, the trappers. We represent the dressers and  
8 dyers. We represent designers. We represent  
9 retailers. We represent the auction houses. They  
10 are the guys that sell the fur. So we represent  
11 every part of the value chain of the fur industry.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And one of the things  
13 that I'm confused about is if we're g-- If you're  
14 asking to set up the Fur Mark self-regulated global  
15 program with the different thresholds that you  
16 mention, the thresholds are different all over the  
17 world about what's acceptable and what's not  
18 acceptable. So even if we were to come up with a  
19 standard that you all said was the appropriate  
20 standard for selling fur in New York City, if you're  
21 importing fur from China or Russia or another country  
22 that doesn't have those strict standards, how do we  
23 know that? How do we differentiate?

24 MARK OTEN: Uh--

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

o7

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Through Fur Mark? How  
3 do we--

4 MARK OTEN: I--

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: How do we do that?

6 MARK OTEN: I would not include China in  
7 Fur Mark. I am not including China in Fur Mark.  
8 So--

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Are you  
10 including Russia?

11 MARK OTEN: I am including some of the  
12 farms that produce sable in Russia, but there are  
13 going to be literally 10 farms that are highly  
14 inspected to make sure that a meeting all the firm  
15 Mark standards. But in terms of China, it's not part  
16 of Fur Mark and the reason it's not part of Fur Mark  
17 is it doesn't reach the threshold that I want in  
18 relation to the standards and the inspections. So, I  
19 have heard your broadcasts on radio where you have  
20 expressed concern about fur coming from China. Fur  
21 Mark would mean that wouldn't happen here in New  
22 York.

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: When was Fur Mark  
24 thought of? I mean, when did you decide to create  
25 Fur Mark?



1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

aa

2 again, I didn't understand when some of the  
3 colleagues who oppose fur saying that there is no  
4 regulation in place. Listen, this is such a  
5 controversial industry, let's face it. But there is  
6 lots of regulation in place which is government  
7 regulation.

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But that's--

9 MARK OTEN: Now, that is not funded by  
10 us. We are going above that with Fur Mark so that we  
11 can streamline the process.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] But  
13 correct me-- correct me if I'm wrong.

14 MARK OTEN: Sure.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: The information that I  
16 have from the lawyers and the policy analysts here at  
17 the Council through their research in preparing to  
18 today's hearing said that fur farming has been banned  
19 in numerous countries. Is that correct?

20 MARK OTEN: So, it's been banned in the  
21 UK.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Why? Why was it banned  
23 in the UK?

24 MARK OTEN: Well, it--

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

100

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Why did that government  
3 make the decision to ban fur farming?

4 MARK OTEN: It is a popular issue. The  
5 labor government that came in, they decided to  
6 abandon fur. They decided to ban fox farming. They  
7 decided to ban a number of issues in the UK and, you  
8 know, obviously, they have an elected man day. That  
9 is their choice. Austria has also banned fur  
10 farming. There is currently--

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] The  
12 Netherlands is banned fur farming.

13 MARK OTEN: There is currently farming in  
14 Netherlands, but that will be phased out in, I think,  
15 in about three year's time.

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And Northern Ireland has  
17 banned fur farming.

18 MARK OTEN: Well, it's part of the UK.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Serbia. Serbia and  
20 Croatia--

21 MARK OTEN: Yep.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: have banned for farming.  
23 It's being phased out in Denmark.

24 MARK OTEN: No. It's definitely not  
25 being phased out in Denmark. Denmark is, as you will

2 hear later from one of the vets from Denmark, Denmark  
3 is one of the biggest fur farming countries.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: It's not being phased  
5 out?

6 MARK OTEN: A hun-- Absolutely n--

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Japan?

8 MARK OTEN: No. Not that I'm on.

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Ok. So I might have had  
10 information here.

11 MARK OTEN: Yeah.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I see that the  
13 information I have say that in Denmark and Japan is  
14 being phased out.

15 MARK OTEN: No. No. Denmark is a very,  
16 very strong supporter of fur. In fact, the Danish  
17 governments have expressed concerns about what's  
18 happening in New York and we're talking to them at  
19 the moment about what the WTO and GATT implications  
20 of a fur ban in New York are. So, no. They are  
21 very, very supportive of--

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And again, just on the  
23 British fashion week in London fashion week,  
24 information I have and says, in 2018, the British

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

102

2 Fashion Council declared that London fashion week  
3 would be totally fur-free.

4 MARK OTEN: Absolutely-- I don't know  
5 how I can say it many more times without sounding  
6 peculiar, but, you know, Caroline Roche is the CEO.  
7 I know her. I spoke to her. Absolutely not. And we  
8 can show you the fur that was shown in February just  
9 a few months ago.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, the lawyers told me  
11 that fox farming is currently banned in Denmark.

12 MARK OTEN: Yes. Yeah. That was many  
13 years-- Many years ago.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So partially--

15 MARK OTEN: Sorry. I thought you meant  
16 currently being phased out. No. There was a ban in  
17 the past on that.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I'm  
19 going to turn it back to you for other folks that  
20 have questions.

21 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you, Mr.  
22 Speaker. We have Keith Powers. Okay. We're going  
23 to pass it over to Peter Koo.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you. Thank  
25 you, Mr. Chair and thank you all for coming. So,

2 would you say the fur industry is a dying industry?

3 Because the previous panel mentioned there were 400

4 fur outlets in New York City and now you only have

5 14. So even without passing the law, I mean, your

6 industry is dying, right? People's attitudes

7 changed. They don't buy furs anymore. Like not like

8 in the old times. No? I mean, I remember people use

9 to buy mink coats and all this. Now, when he is

10 interested in buying mink anymore.

11 MARK OTEN: No. It's-- What's happening

12 is what is happening and then read tell generally.

13 Instead of having the spoke stores which just sell

14 one product, for has actually moved away from being

15 in the first shop, however this still there, into

16 Barney's, Macy's, Bloomingdale's. It's in the

17 boutiques. And being sold on the Internet. So it's

18 just being sold in a different way, but it is still

19 being sold in large numbers and the industry is worth

20 33 billion. So it's growing and very vibrant. But,

21 yes. It's not sold in exactly the same way that it

22 was, maybe, five, 10 years ago in those individuals

23 for shops, although they are still there. We want to

24 protect to them, but it's been actually purchased in

25 different ways now. And, you know, the Internet is

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

104

2 one of the challenges when it comes to trying to ban  
3 fur in New York because are you going to stop people  
4 from being able to purchase fur on the Internet? How  
5 on earth would you control that? And patterns are  
6 changing on how people buy things, but they are still  
7 buying it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: No. But in talking  
9 about the volume. On the sales and the amount of the  
10 dollars, must have decreased a lot, right?

11 MARK OTEN: No.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah?

13 MARK OTEN: The pattern of what people  
14 buy has changed. So, instead of it necessarily being  
15 a full loan code which mainly, you would sell a  
16 number of, and now people are buying for in different  
17 ways. Trim is really popular. Canada Goose is a  
18 huge trend. So people are just buying it in a  
19 different way.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So how many cities  
21 or countries have banned fur sales?

22 MARK OTEN: So--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: As far as you know.

24 MARK OTEN: No-- I just want to actually  
25 be accurate. No country in the world has banned the

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

105

2 sale of fur. Some of the countries, as the Speaker  
3 mentioned, have banned fur farming, but no country  
4 has banned the sale of fur.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: No--

6 MARK OTEN: Cities, in San Francisco and  
7 LA, have voted to do that.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Only two US cities?

9 MARK OTEN: Only two US cities. San  
10 Francisco and LA. So, as yet-- Unless I'm wrong,  
11 it's just those two cities. So it's yet to be tested  
12 in terms of international law as to whether this kind  
13 of ban is indeed legal.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So, I understand  
15 most of the furs come from the farmed animals, right?  
16 No trapped animals anymore.

17 MARK OTEN: Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So what's the  
19 percentage like--

20 MARK OTEN: About 80 percent come from  
21 farmed and 20 percent come from trapping. Maybe 85  
22 percent farmed and 15 percent trapping, actually.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay. Yeah. So  
24 who regulate the farms? The Department of  
25 Agriculture or who?

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

106

2 MARK OTEN: It depends which country.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: In USA?

4 MARK OTEN: Clayton? Can I maybe pass  
5 onto somebody else who actually is--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah.

7 MARK OTEN: a farmer who is inspected?

8 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: It's regulated by the  
9 Fur Commission USA. We're actually undergoing a  
10 revamping of that, so it will be an independent  
11 third-party regulation.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Independent means  
13 what? I mean, who-- Anybody can regulated?

14 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: It'll be oversight by  
15 veterinarians.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Huh.

17 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: So veterinarians will  
18 come and inspect the farms.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So, I'm just  
20 wonder-- You also mentioned there are many farms  
21 from other countries. In China and in Russia. And  
22 how do we know the quality of their furs?

23 MARK OTEN: So, the majority of the fur  
24 which comes into America comes from America and from  
25 Europe. For farming is in Denmark, in Finland, in

2 Greece, in Italy, in France, is in Poland. Those are  
3 the main fur farming countries in Europe. Then you  
4 have Russian which is specific around Russian Sable.  
5 And then you have the wild fur coming from Canada and  
6 America. And also a lot of mink fur which is farmed  
7 in America and Canada. So those are the main sources  
8 for where the fur comes into America. Most of the  
9 Chinese production actually stays and is consumed and  
10 bought within china. And, as I said, it would not be  
11 part of Fur Mark.

12 SPEAKER JOHNSON: My understanding is--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: that India has banned  
15 the importing of furs. Is that correct?

16 MARK OTEN: Um--

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Fur products.

18 MARK OTEN: On some fur, yes, it has. On  
19 fox it has. Yes. It has.

20 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Does-- Not to  
21 interrupt, but does the Fur Mark still believe fox  
22 farms and killing foxes is okay?

23 MARK OTEN: Fox production is under  
24 welfare and it's part of Fur Mark. Yes.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

109

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Production or  
3 slaughtering? Are you saying the same thing?

4 MARK OTEN: Product--

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Production.

6 MARK OTEN: Yes. Yes.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: All right. My last  
9 question is when you mentioned before you kill the  
10 animal by gassing, right? So is there any other  
11 alternative or a more humane way to do it? Like  
12 anesthesia or something like that? Gas is an  
13 anesthesia, right? Yeah?

14 MARK OTEN: We are told by the experts  
15 that the most humane way is gas.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Oh. Okay. Thank  
17 you.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Council member powers?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Great. Thank you.  
20 Thank you for the testimony. You know, similar to  
21 some of the Speaker's questions here, I think, if you  
22 believe that this is unethical, it's hard to believe  
23 that the answer is to have the industry's sort of  
24 police itself in terms of the Fur Mark. And I think  
25 that's one of the questions and the concerns that

2 anybody would have if you were trying to do some  
3 regulation is, essentially, handing it over to  
4 industry and say, and no-- or some third party that  
5 is affiliated with the industry to say that they  
6 should be-- that's the way. Because in any  
7 industry, not just the fur industry, that would seem  
8 like an odd way to handover the regulation if you  
9 feel like this is an unethical issue or this is  
10 humanity-- you know, inhumane issues related to  
11 trapping and for as-- entirely. I just wanted to  
12 add that in because I think that's a difficult thing,  
13 I know, for me to tackle is, if your proposal here is  
14 to have the industry's sort of self-regulate itself--  
15 It's good to have standards. I know you want to  
16 respond. It's good to have standards, but-- and  
17 higher standards and I appreciate that, but hard to  
18 find that that would be the last place one would end  
19 up on that. Yeah. You can respond to that.

20 MARK OTEN: Yeah. So, just to be clear,  
21 so this is on top of government inspection which  
22 takes place. So, it's not as if we are saying the  
23 only people doing the inspection on the process is  
24 the IFF and Fur Mark. This is in addition to the  
25 current government programs which take place. But

2 the reason we are doing it is because we want to go  
3 further and the reason we are doing it, as the  
4 speaker alluded to earlier on, is there are different  
5 measures and different countries that take different  
6 approaches. But this is-- it's already regulated.  
7 We are going beyond that.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. I appreciate  
9 that. I want to go switch to-- You know, just a  
10 question to the other panel and I appreciated the  
11 response I was given about storefronts and stores and  
12 I heard your answer about diversification and how  
13 people are selling at different places, but it does  
14 seem to represent something to me if there is a, you  
15 know, reduction in places that are selling it, the  
16 numbers are for the versus what it was, in terms of  
17 usage and, you know, people wearing it, I know  
18 [inaudible 01:50:50] is still a way that many people  
19 have fur and everything. But what is the-- I mean,  
20 what is the answer to-- It can't just be  
21 diversification. I mean, there does seem to be a  
22 trend away from wearing fur and real fur in one's  
23 life. Can you give us any data around sales in New  
24 York City and what has been a changeover, let's say,  
25 the last two decades--

2 MARK OTEN: Yeah.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: with regard to  
4 sales?

5 MARK OTEN: looming, the changes, as I  
6 said earlier on, really. That's a model of  
7 specialist stores, whether it be to do with fur or  
8 other items has shifted and changed. You do have  
9 this model of going into boutiques. The two of this  
10 model Barney's and Macy's. They have their  
11 concessions within the stores. You have this shift  
12 and change from being the full garment to the, you  
13 know, the Canada Goose style trim. You've got color,  
14 you've got innovation. You've got the Internet.  
15 This is all meant that the whole pattern of how  
16 people purchase things has changed completely.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Do you have any  
18 data on- let's say even online sales versus brick-  
19 and-mortar sales in New York City?

20 MARK OTEN: I don't. I might be able to  
21 get some to the committee. It's pretty tough. It's  
22 pretty hard. That if we get down to the point where  
23 you will be doing a ban, then we will need to get  
24 into that because somehow you're going to have to ban  
25 the percentage of people who are buying on the

2 Internet. And that is a tricky one because I'm not  
3 sure how you would enforce and stop the New Yorker  
4 from buying on the Internet. I just don't know how  
5 you do it. And I assume, if there was a band, people  
6 would just switch to trying to sell on the Internet.  
7 So, you know, I'm not sure how that can be done.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. And I've  
9 seen a number of n-- I appreciate that. And it  
10 would be helpful to hear those numbers--

11 MARK OTEN: Let me try.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: because, you know,  
13 there is a lot of information being put out and I  
14 think there is always-- the lack of clarity in  
15 terms-- we talk about an economic input about what  
16 really-- you know, the validity and the numbers, I  
17 guess, is the--

18 MARK OTEN: Yeah.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: and jobs is another  
20 one that has come up and I know there is different  
21 segments of the industry. But do you numbers around  
22 jobs in the economic--

23 MARK OTEN: Yeah.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: impact?

2 MARK OTEN: I really hope that I can stop  
3 talking soon and we can hear from some real New  
4 Yorkers who are going to be affected by this. But we  
5 believe that the economic study that we've done is  
6 that it will be over 7000 jobs which will be impacted  
7 here in New York.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Can you break down  
9 those 7000 jobs for us in terms of where they are?

10 MARK OTEN: You're going to hear from the  
11 individuals, but it will be people who actually own  
12 the businesses, people who work inside those  
13 businesses whether they work in retail. So that's--  
14 [coughs] excuse me. Sales staff or whether that's  
15 manufacturing staff. Whether they are craftsmen.  
16 Some of these have been crafts that it been passed  
17 down from generation to generation. Artisans,  
18 designers. There is a bunch of folk in this room  
19 that really want to tell their stories about how it  
20 will impact on them.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: I will ask one more  
22 question so we can get to them.

23 MARK OTEN: All right.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Does the number  
25 include employees at Macy's or Bloomingdale's? Not

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

114

2 to pick on those stores and some are in my district.

3 I just mean does that encompass all jobs at a place

4 that might sell apparel that has fur on it?

5 MARK OTEN: I think it's-- Excuse me. I

6 think it's an underestimate because what we have

7 tried to do is to link it where we can. But, for

8 example, we haven't included in those figures the

9 kind of impact of somebody who might be selling and

10 Ugg or Canada Goose into it, for example. So we have

11 tried to ring since then around the fur industry jobs

12 itself, rather than broadening that out. If you

13 wanted to broaden it out, yes, but I couldn't give

14 you an accurate figure on that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. Thank you.

16 Thanks to the Speaker and the Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

18 Cabrera?

19 COUNCILMEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so much.

20 And welcome to the full panel. I'm a little stroke

21 with the number that you just gave, 7000, because

22 just about every article that I've seen from your

23 side, then number that I keep seeing was 1000. So

24 this is the first time, to be honest with you, I have

25 heard the number 7000. So you have a huge

2 incongruency (sic). But I want to address you kept  
3 mentioning scientists. You know, the scientist job  
4 is not to determine morality. Here is where we bring  
5 these issues, social issues, and we get to determine  
6 whether we want to codify these moral issues that  
7 take place. So I'm not going to do for my judgment  
8 to scientists because we've seen with some  
9 scientists, pointed and how many people have been  
10 injured and hurt throughout society. The second  
11 thing I wanted to bring up is that you talked about,  
12 and I hear you trying to come out with scenario where  
13 you have regulation, but how do you regulate trappers  
14 when trappers don't let anybody else know where they  
15 put traps?

16 MARK OTEN: Okay. So, two questions. On  
17 the morality issue, I totally agree with you. It's  
18 your moral versus my moral and a scientist can't  
19 impact on that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I appreciate  
21 that.

22 MARK OTEN: I totally respect that and  
23 get that. In terms of the trapping, the trappers are  
24 issued licenses and they are regulated in Canada and  
25 America and they have agreed trapping areas where

2 they are allowed to trap. They have agreed then  
3 strict quotas on how many animals that are allowed to  
4 trap and we and can trace back exactly where the  
5 animal which goes to be sold at the auction comes  
6 from. Which trap line it came from and we can check  
7 and inspect whether that trapper has got their  
8 license and whether they are working to the approved  
9 quota that the government set for whether it's beaver  
10 or whatever particular animal it is.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay. I  
12 appreciate that bit of information. How many minks--  
13 Maybe I should ask what animals do you deal with?

14 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: Mink.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Mink?

16 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: How many do  
18 you usually have in a cage?

19 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: Never more than two.  
20 Like Mark said, during the whelp, you know, when  
21 they're having their babies, you know, you can't  
22 avoid that, but, yeah. Never more than two on our  
23 farm.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Are there--  
25 Are they not solitary creatures in the natural?

2 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: No.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: They are  
4 solitary creatures. I'm telling you. They are.  
5 Which I'm surprised. This is what you do for a  
6 living thing, you know, when you put them together,  
7 you are taking them out of their normal habitat. And  
8 the normal natural instinct. You put them in a  
9 situation that-- I don't-- You put them in a  
10 situation that isn't all natural and therefore not  
11 beneficial for the mink. And so, I'm just wondering  
12 why you wouldn't put them in a single cage. An  
13 individual mink in an individual cage.

14 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: So we put them in-- We  
15 have done studies. There are studies been done where  
16 they do better at a young age with a pair and then,  
17 once they reach adulthood, then, yes, they are an  
18 individual cage for no doubt about that. Once they  
19 become adults. For their own safety and the safety  
20 of the other one, of course.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Here's my last  
22 thing--

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: How big are those cages?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Good question.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

119

2 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: They're-- I don't know  
3 if the top of my head. I don't want to guess.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Wait. Wait.  
5 Wait. I'm confused. You're the rancher.

6 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: Two feet by three feet.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Two feet by three feet.

8 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: With a nest box and  
9 bedding inside of it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Two feet by  
11 three feet. This is the living space for their  
12 entire lives?

13 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: Yes.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Our understanding is  
15 most mink--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Do you--

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Our understanding is  
18 that most mink cages are the size of a shoebox is the  
19 information that we received.

20 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: That's not correct.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: No? Okay.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Well, let's  
23 suppose-- I'll give you the two feet three feet. Is  
24 that like a natural type of environment? A humane  
25 way to go about it when it comes to a mink?

2 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: According to the-- You  
3 know, like Mark said, according to scientists, that's  
4 what they--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I don't know  
6 the last time that a scientist interviewed a mink and  
7 said, hey, is this the way-- you know, is this a  
8 good living? I know I'm being a little sarcastic  
9 year, but, come on.

10 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: Excuse me, sir. Have  
11 you interviewed a mink?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: No. And  
13 that's my point. That's exactly my point. But I do  
14 see in the natural habitat where they live in and  
15 they do not live in a two feet by three feet  
16 environment.

17 [Applause]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Let's be real.  
19 Let me talk about the elephant in the room here.

20 [Background comments]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: We are raising  
22 animals just for the sole purpose of skimming them  
23 for our locks. Really. That needed to be said.

24 [Applause]

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

120

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I've just got  
3 to get it off my chest.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: No. No. Folks. Folks.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet in the room.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: If you want  
7 to-- If you agree with something, just both sides,  
8 just go like this. All right? Let's do like church.  
9 So, but I have to tell you. I have to get it off my  
10 chest because, really, at the end of the day, that's  
11 what it comes down to and I-- It was said before.  
12 It's not a byproduct, you know, when it comes to  
13 food. Yes. I hear my colleague with Adam and Eve.  
14 I'm a pastor of a church. Then there was a necessity  
15 back there. We don't need this anymore. This is the  
16 real issue before us and I sympathize when it comes  
17 to the job. Please understand. My heart goes out.  
18 I hear you. But what I hear and what we could may be  
19 to hear, Mr. Speaker, is to be able to transfer these  
20 jobs to be conducive and congruent to what New  
21 Yorkers are asking for. We're talking about 75  
22 percent plus and all of the boroughs. This is not  
23 like's borough--

24 [Background comments]

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: wants this and  
3 the other one wants this. I know you mentioned  
4 Beverly Hills, but you know, some of the richest  
5 people-- As a matter of fact, the riches people--  
6 The fifth richest people in America live right here a  
7 couple blocks away and they are speaking loud. They  
8 live right here in Tribeca making 850,000 dollars.  
9 And then you go to my district where people are  
10 making 30,000 dollars and everybody is saying the  
11 same thing. And I think the discussion should be now  
12 how do we transition people who are in the field to  
13 be able to help them with the transferable skills  
14 that they have, awesome skills that they have, to be  
15 able for them to have a job to take care of their  
16 families and, at the same thing, do your main thing.  
17 Because I don't see a humane way of raising animals  
18 to be-- to, basically, where going to raise you-- I  
19 imagine aliens come from outer space and say well,  
20 were just going to raise humans just to take your  
21 skin so we can wear them. I mean, it's just like it  
22 just doesn't make any sense. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.  
23 I just don't see-- And can answer back if you want,  
24 but I just don't see the logic. It's unreasonable

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

122

2 and I-- and it's inhumane. You know? It just makes  
3 no sense to me.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Council member, I want  
5 to thank you and I want to just mention that it's my  
6 understanding and, again, correct me if I'm wrong,  
7 but the for commission, the guidelines that are  
8 developed and regularly updated by the for commission  
9 of the United States advises on the ethical farming  
10 of minks that this is what they recommend. The  
11 recommended pen cage size for a female mink without a  
12 letter is 15 inches high and seven and a half inches  
13 wide. That's the guideline that the commission  
14 recommends in the United States of America. So 15  
15 inches high and seven and a half inches wide. It's  
16 only a few inches higher than a shoebox standing on  
17 its end. And that's--

18 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: That's--

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: what we have.

20 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: No. That's currently  
21 outdated. No. That's not correct.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: That's out-- When was  
23 that changed?

24 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: A month ago. Two months  
25 ago.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

123

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Two months ago.

3 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: Two years ago.

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Two years ago. Two  
5 years ago. Okay. I want to thank you, Council  
6 member. I'm going to turn it to Council member  
7 Rosenthal.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: It just-- So,  
9 two years ago-- What's the new standard requirement?

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: What's the--

11 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: I'm sorry.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: What's the  
13 current--

14 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: I didn't hear the  
15 question.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: requirement?

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: What's the current cage  
18 requirement?

19 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: I don't have the  
20 standard in front of me right now.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Do you know?  
22 What's the current--

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: requirement?

25 [Background comments]

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

124

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Slightly larger.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So it's  
4 slightly larger than 15 inches by seven inches.

5 [Background comments]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So maybe--

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So but--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: 10 inches by  
9 20 inches.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But just so you know,  
11 Council member, what I was reading off of is--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

13 SPEAKER JOHNSON: from the Fur Commission  
14 website. Anna says this was the 2019 edition book 1.  
15 So this was the updated edition from this year is  
16 what is on the website right now. So the Fur  
17 Commission should update the website the website is  
18 not accurately reflecting reality. This is what the  
19 website says right now if you go to the website.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So that's  
21 concerning and it does also make me wonder-- living,  
22 I don't know if you are sworn in, but it makes me  
23 wonder about your saying that your cages are two feet  
24 by three feet. But even that aside, I concur,  
25 course, with Council member Cabrera that that is

2 inhumane from the get go. Of course, and the fox  
3 industry, the goal is to overfeed them so they are  
4 five times the size they normally would be to use the  
5 firm. Is that also done in the mink industry?

6 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: No.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: What's the  
8 goal for the size of an adult mink?

9 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: We don't particularly  
10 have a goal per mink. It's like I said in my opening  
11 statement. And so we feed them. They get an amount  
12 of feed to where they eat what they want and when  
13 they're done eating, they are done eating.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I don't know  
15 what a mink's biological impulse control is. I mean,  
16 I know with cats and--

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Council member, may I  
18 interject? What's the average length of a mink that  
19 you are raising? An adult. An adult mink?

20 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: I don't know.

21 SPEAKER JOHNSON: You farm them, so you  
22 would know. What is the average? What's the average  
23 length?

24 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: 24 inches? On average.  
25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

126

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And how about  
3 a mink in the wild?

4 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: Live mink. Close to  
5 that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: All right. So  
7 when we get some facts, we should look at those, but  
8 regard--

9 SPEAKER JOHNSON: The re--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Irregardless--

11 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Council member, the  
12 reason why I asked is if it is 24 inches and we just  
13 talked about the sides of the cage-- So, is the  
14 average amine canoes 24 inches long--

15 [Applause]

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Settle down, please.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: and even if the cage is  
18 two feet by three feet, though that's not what the  
19 guidelines we have in front of us are, that is a very  
20 small amount of room for an adult mink to be able to  
21 move around in and you just sold as its 24 inches.

22 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: Well, it--

23 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, it-- That--

24 CLAYTON BEXSTEAD: That--

25

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: That's very  
3 disconcerting to hear that those are the numbers.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: The whole  
5 thing is disturbing. I don't care if you're going to  
6 add an extra foot to it. You know, I-- It's  
7 inhumane. It's cruel and inhumane. Full stop. And  
8 it looks to me like the market is recognizing that.  
9 I am looking at an April 30, 2019 article that says  
10 that the largest for her auction house is cutting  
11 its-- the number of its workers by between 130 and  
12 150 employees which was on top of a 45 person cut in  
13 2018 and it's because the demand has been reduced by  
14 over 30 percent.

15 MARK OTEN: Yep. That's accurate. The  
16 demand for fur soled in the last five or six years in  
17 Asia and then, in China specifically, the market for  
18 luxury good has really tailed off in the last two  
19 years. Huge, huge downturn. And it's, as a result  
20 of that downturn in China, that the overall figures  
21 are down. That's not the picture in cities in Europe  
22 and New York. It is, if you talk to Jaguar, Land  
23 Rover, if you talk to many industries, just look at  
24 the stats on the China economy.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

128

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And then just  
3 looking at one step. If you have additional  
4 statistics you would like to supplied to the Council,  
5 I would be interested.

6 MARK OTEN: I would love to.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: In addition to  
8 that, I would really like to see the route to your  
9 number the 7000 jobs would be lost.

10 MARK OTEN: We--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Given that the  
12 number of for houses decreased from 450 in the  
13 seventies to 14 right now, it cannot be explained by  
14 some little pop-up shops and Macy's and wherever  
15 else. You need to show us the route to the 7000.

16 MARK OTEN: We will.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And I'd like  
18 to know what the number was in the 19 seventies. Was  
19 it still 7000?

20 MARK OTEN: If you would--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So a route to  
22 the number--

23 MARK OTEN: Sure.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: would mean the  
25 number of stores.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

12a

2 MARK OTEN: We have a full economic--

3 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Do you have  
4 that?

5 MARK OTEN: We have a full economic study  
6 available and the way I'm more than happy to--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: sorry. Was it  
8 distributed for this hearing? Do I have it in my  
9 pile of--

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Did you give it to us?

11 MARK OTEN: I don't know if you've got it  
12 in your packs at the moment, but I know that we have  
13 done it and I believe we have submitted it. But I  
14 can't say, however, whether it's in your particular  
15 pack at the moment. I don't know what you have in  
16 front of me.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I have the  
18 material when anyone testifies and I think the  
19 general public knows this. I'm sorry if you didn't.  
20 You come with your facts and figures if you're going  
21 to ask the Council for its time, which is what I have  
22 right now, although I'm headed down to a budget  
23 briefing. Right? So--

24 MARK OTEN: Well--

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

120

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: now is my time  
3 for me to look at data. And I'm not seeing it is  
4 what I'm saying.

5 MARK OTEN: Okay.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So--

7 MARK OTEN: Well, I know it's been--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: perhaps for  
9 the second hearing--

10 MARK OTEN: Sure.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: you'll be able  
12 to provide some actual data to show us why we would  
13 continue and inhumane practice.

14 MARK OTEN: I can only apologize--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you very  
16 much.

17 MARK OTEN: if you've not received it and  
18 you will receive it.

19 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you all very much.

20 MARK OTEN: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: You can go ahead to the  
23 next panel.

24 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Oh. The next panel  
25 way of Lindsay Greene from the mayor's office.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

121

2 [Background comments]

3 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I'm going to ask the  
4 Council to swear the administration in. Thank you.

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: Please raise your right  
6 hands. Do you swear and affirm to tell the truth,  
7 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth before  
8 this committee and to answer Council member questions  
9 honestly?

10 LINDSAY GREENE: I do.

11 CHRISTINE KIM: I do.

12 I do.

13 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you. You may be  
15 getting in whatever order you would like. Thank you  
16 for being here today. Thank you for your patience  
17 and letting some other folks testified before the  
18 administration.

19 CHRISTINE KIM: Good afternoon, Speaker  
20 Johnson, Chairman Espinal, the committee on consumer  
21 affairs, and Council members. My name is Christine  
22 Kim and I am a Senior Community Liaison at the  
23 Mayor's Community Affairs Unit. And I work primarily  
24 on animal welfare issues. I am joined on the panel  
25 today by two other colleagues from the

2 administration. Lindsay Greene, Senior advisor to  
3 the deputy mayor for housing and economic  
4 development, and Casey Adams, director of the city  
5 legislative affairs at the department of consumer  
6 affairs. We are pleased to represent Mayor Bill  
7 DeBlasio's administration here today. Ms. Greene and  
8 I will be testifying today and Mr. Adams will be  
9 joining us for Q&A I am pleased to be here today to  
10 discuss animal welfare, which is a priority of this  
11 administration. Like the Council, we are committed  
12 to advancing animal protection causes and I want to  
13 specifically thank you, speaker Johnson, for your  
14 personal commitment to animal welfare issues over the  
15 last several years. The mayor has long supported  
16 progressive animal welfare legislation, signed many  
17 bills into law to protect animals, and implemented  
18 bold and positive policies for animals ranging from  
19 companion animals to wildlife. Mayor DiBlasio is  
20 also the first and only mayor to have an animal  
21 welfare liaison to be the direct link between City  
22 Hall and the animal welfare community. He is been  
23 listening and responding to the concerns of animal  
24 advocates since day one. For example, in  
25 collaboration with the city Council, the Mayor has

2 invested an unprecedented amount of funding into  
3 animal care centers of New York City, which is our  
4 hope in to end mission municipal animal shelter  
5 system. Just last year, the mayor and speaker  
6 announced an additional 3 million dollars for animal  
7 care centers, bringing their fiscal year 19 budget to  
8 a record 17.6 million dollars. As a result, animal  
9 care centers is at a historic 94 percent placement  
10 rate making international leader in the placement of  
11 dogs, cats, and rabbits. In 2016, the mayor  
12 announced a plan to bring full service animal care  
13 centers to each of our five boroughs for the first  
14 time. As well as a standalone adoption center next  
15 to our Manhattan shelter. Further increasing our  
16 ability to adopt out animals, prevent the surrender  
17 of animals, and provide critical animal services to  
18 our communities. With the support of the city  
19 Council, we are now well underway having locked  
20 insights for the care centers in the Bronx and in  
21 Queens. This commitment to shelter animals has been  
22 cemented in the past year when we signed a 34 year  
23 contract to ensure the stability animal care centers  
24 need in order to continue to deliver positive  
25 outcomes for shelter animals for decades to come. We

2 have also worked with city Council to enact a number  
3 of pet shop laws, which ultimately reduce the number  
4 of surrendered and homeless animals in our shelters.  
5 These laws include a mandate to spay and neuter dogs  
6 and cats sold in pet shops. The banning of the sales  
7 of dog and cats sourced from puppy and kitten mills,  
8 and the banning of the sales of rabbits in pet shops.  
9 And, thanks to the Council leadership, all new pet  
10 shops and 24-hour veterinary clinics are now required  
11 to have a fire sprinkler system. Recently, the mayor  
12 announced that all New York City public schools will  
13 participate in meatless Mondays, which will affect  
14 1.1 million students. Not only will our schools, as  
15 well as all 11 of our public hospitals, be serving  
16 vegetarian meals on Mondays, but all city agencies  
17 will be required to phase out processed meats and  
18 reduce their beef purchases by 50 percent as directed  
19 by the mayor's Green New Deal to combat climate  
20 change. In addition to his many accomplishments for  
21 animals used for food and companion animals, the  
22 mayor has shown extraordinary commitment to wildlife.  
23 The brand-new state-of-the-art animal shelter in the  
24 Bronx to be completed by 2024, will not only be for  
25 companion animals, but will also feature a clinic in

2 education center for New York City's only federally  
3 licensed wildlife rehabilitation center. The mayor  
4 is also demonstrating the feasibility and success of  
5 large-scale nonlethal wildlife management with the  
6 implementation of the city's deer impact management  
7 plan, which is already led to a deer population  
8 reduction of approximately 15 percent. This is a  
9 dramatic example of a humane and scientifically  
10 cutting-edge alternative to hunting and conventional  
11 lethal methods of wildlife management. And through  
12 the city's wildlife NYC campaign, we are promoting  
13 the safe coexistence of wildlife and people and  
14 managing other impacts of deer in our urban  
15 environment. In 2017, the mayor was pleased to  
16 support a bill that Speaker Johnson was a lead  
17 cosponsor of. To ban wild and exotic animals from  
18 circuses in the city. Wild animals do not exist for  
19 our entertainment, nor do they exist to be made into  
20 luxury apparel, to be worn when there are modern and  
21 synthetic alternatives. Fur's time has come and gone  
22 in terms of the fashion industry. A lot of the  
23 leading figures in fashion agree and may have stopped  
24 using fur. It is inhumane. While we believe there  
25 are possible changes that would improve the bill's

2 implementation and effectiveness, the prohibition on  
3 the sale of for aligns with the mayor's perspective  
4 on animal welfare. The mayor supports the intro--  
5 The mayor supports intro 1476 A to make New York City  
6 the first city on the East Coast and the largest city  
7 in the country to ban the sale of for. We look  
8 forward to discussing and working with the Council on  
9 the details of this bill. Now I turned my colleague,  
10 Lindsay Greene, who will discuss the administration's  
11 feedback on the proposed bill. Thank you.

12 LINDSAY GREENE: Thank you, Christine.  
13 Good afternoon, Speaker Johnson, Chair Espinal, and  
14 Councilman Cabrera. I am Lindsay Greene, a Senior  
15 Advisor to the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic  
16 Development. I focus on policy issues that involve  
17 economic development and business regulation, among  
18 other topics. Thank you for inviting me and my  
19 colleagues to testify on the proposed legislation to  
20 ban the sale of for apparel in New York City. As you  
21 know, mayor DiBlasio has always been a strong animal  
22 welfare advocate. As you have already heard from Ms.  
23 Kim. Under Mayor DiBlasio's leadership, the  
24 administration has deepened its commitment to support  
25 animal welfare in New York City. Having highlighted

2 those accomplishments and our ongoing partnership  
3 with the Council, I wanted to provide some specific  
4 feedback on the bill at hand. Intro 1476 A seeks to  
5 prohibit the sale of all for apparel in New York City  
6 with proposed exemptions for used fur items or for  
7 items worn for religious custom. The administration  
8 supports the Speaker's bill as it is consistent with  
9 our history of supporting animal welfare values. We  
10 want to specifically thank you, Speaker Johnson, for  
11 your leadership on this issue and for your work and  
12 dressing animal welfare issues over the last several  
13 years. With regards to this specific legislation, I  
14 want to quickly touch on some anticipated enforcement  
15 practices. The administration wants to ensure that  
16 the firm prohibition is clear, easy to understand,  
17 and enforceable. This will increase the likelihood  
18 of compliance, which is a benefit of all parties,  
19 including businesses and their customers, and  
20 presents the best outcome for the broad and the  
21 welfare goals of the proposed legislation. We  
22 recognize the need for carefully crafted exemptions  
23 for used for apparel and the need for religious  
24 sensitivity for fur apparel worn as part of a  
25 religious custom. In most cases, only the owner of

2 the piece of apparel will be in a position to know  
3 whether that piece is used, is constructed from other  
4 used pieces, or is worn as a matter of religious  
5 custom. As currently drafted, the proposed  
6 legislation and includes these exemptions and we  
7 believe this language could be a bit clearer.

8 Therefore, we believe that the bill should base the  
9 burden of proving that a piece of for apparel  
10 qualifies for an exemption upon the person most  
11 likely to have the information needed to make that  
12 determination. The person or business who chooses to  
13 sell it. This approach will make the bill more  
14 enforceable and ensure that only for apparel that  
15 genuinely qualifies for exemption will remain on the  
16 market. We also recognize that this bill, while  
17 achieving progress from an animal welfare issues  
18 perspective would impact businesses and workers in  
19 this sector. One option we have heard proposed is to  
20 allow for phase in an adjustment. That will maximize  
21 a business's ability to adapt to this significant new  
22 regulation. On the merits, it would be a way to  
23 allow businesses the opportunity to transition to for  
24 apparel that is used or vintage or high-end faux fur,  
25 as have many fashion houses as discussed today.

2 This proposal, as well as others that we expect to  
3 come from such businesses that engage in the  
4 legislative process regarding this proposal all  
5 warrant consideration. In conclusion, I would like  
6 to reiterate that Mayor DeBlasio is a strong  
7 supporter of animal welfare issues. I want to again,  
8 thank you, Speaker Johnson, for your leadership on  
9 this issue and commitment to animal welfare during  
10 your tenure. The mayor and his administration  
11 support your bill, Speaker Johnson, and recognize  
12 that there are many details to be refined in order to  
13 most effectively implement it. We look forward to  
14 working with the Council to do just that during the  
15 legislative process. Thank you for your time. Were  
16 happy to take any questions.

17 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I want to thank you  
18 all for being here today. I really appreciate it. I  
19 am grateful to hear that the mayor supports this bill  
20 and I just want to say I'm really proud of the record  
21 that we have together over the last five and a half  
22 years. The Council pushed really hard for that  
23 additional funding for animal care centers so that we  
24 can get an even higher live release rate of animals  
25 that enter our shelter system. We deserve to be a no

2 kill city and that's what we have to strive for  
3 through our shelter system. We need to build those  
4 shelters faster though. We've been waiting a while  
5 and we need to get them done. Especially a Manhattan  
6 shelter and we just finished the upgrades on the  
7 State Island shelter, which is great. I'm really  
8 proud. I'm really proud that we are-- Just figured  
9 out the Bronx shelter up in Co-op City and we are  
10 still working on a Queens shelter location, as well.  
11 And the bills that you mentioned, whether it's the  
12 circus bills that I worked on with former Council  
13 member Rosie Mendez or bills that we are  
14 contemplating now on bird-safe glass in New York City  
15 to protect birds or looking at foie gras and how it's  
16 cruel and how we don't need it in New York City  
17 anymore. I am really proud of our agenda and  
18 becoming a more humane city for animals and I'm  
19 grateful for the partnership that we have had. So I  
20 want to thank you for that partnership and for being  
21 here today. I have a couple of questions for you if  
22 I can find them. So-- The exemptions that you  
23 mentioned, Lindsay, on the religious exemptions that  
24 we included in the bill, when the administration and  
25 the law department took a look at this. Did you look

2 at what other municipalities had done in Los Angeles  
3 and in San Francisco and other places to come to a  
4 place of being comfortable with what you delineated  
5 in your testimony today?

6 LINDSAY GREENE: Thank you, Speaker, for  
7 the question. We have begun to look at those other  
8 jurisdictions. I think there are some additional  
9 details to talk through with staff during the  
10 legislative process and I think there's some things  
11 to be learned from other jurisdiction's experience  
12 implementing. I know it's early days, but I think we  
13 have some things to learn and would love to talk  
14 about those things with you.

15 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you very much.  
16 Chair Espinal, I'm really grateful that you've had  
17 this hearing today. I have to run out. I'll be  
18 back, but I have to run to a meeting and I'll come  
19 back and I appreciate, Council member Cabrera, you  
20 being here, as well. Thank you for your testimony  
21 today.

22 LINDSAY GREENE: Thank you, Speaker.

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you, Mr.  
24 Speaker. With that said, we don't have any further  
25 questions, so thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

1 1 2

2 LINDSAY GREENE: Thank you.

3 [Background comments]

4 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Up next we have

5 Cathy Nazari, Solid Waste Advisory Board, Dan

6 Matthews from PETA, Alexi Limbo-- Sorry.

7 Libormisla? Please correct me when you get up there.

8 [Background comments]

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet down, please.

10 [Background comments]

11 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: And we have

12 Pricilla Farrell, Friends of Animals.

13 LEGAL COUNSEL: You should explain that

14 we're alternating [inaudible 02:24:21]

15 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: So we're going to

16 put a clock of two minutes for testimony. You may

17 begin.

18 DAN MATTHEWS: My name is Dan Matthews,

19 Senior Vice President of PETA. PETA was involved in

20 the fur bans that passed overwhelmingly in LA and San

21 Francisco. Law makers are voting to ban fur sales

22 because fur producers operate outside of the law.

23 Unlike other industries that use animals, fur

24 producers do not receive government oversight or

25 inspection to ensure that the animals live or die

2 with even minimal standards. PETA filmed a mink  
3 farmer in Maryland who killed the animals by  
4 injecting them with weed killer because it was cheap  
5 and easy. He had no experience and no interest in  
6 veterinary medicine. We filmed a chinchilla farmer  
7 in Indiana who genitally electrocuted the animals by  
8 clamping their genitalia and attaching it to a car  
9 battery. The voltage was no consistent and he  
10 laughed when some of the animals came alive on the  
11 skinning boards. He had no interest and no  
12 experience in veterinary medicine. In Korea, we  
13 filmed a fur farmer's long foxes by the tail between  
14 two wooden boards and then crushed them to death  
15 before exporting their pelts to New York City. In  
16 China, we filmed fur farmers who slammed the raccoon  
17 dog's heads into the ground which dazed them, but did  
18 not kill them. They were skinned alive. Dog fur  
19 from China has ended up on racks here in New York  
20 City where it was mislabeled as fake. The FTC has  
21 cited many retailers for false labeling, but there  
22 were no penalties. That's why we need a law banning  
23 fur that comes with the penalty. Nowadays, in the  
24 States, animals are often killed for less conspicuous  
25 for trim or collars, mostly coyotes. They are killed

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

1 1 1

2 in traps like I demonstrated before. Traps that have  
3 been banned in 100 countries, but are used in all but  
4 seven of the United States. That trap was available  
5 for 10 dollars on Amazon and, though meant for  
6 coyotes, may routinely cripple and kill family dogs,  
7 cats, and other wildlife. Like for farms, trapping  
8 is self-regulated. Trappers claim that they check  
9 traps daily, but if the weather is bad or they just  
10 don't feel like it--

11 [Background comments]

12 DAN MATTHEWS: animals can languish--

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Every--

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

15 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Everybody keep it  
16 down. I'll decide when I want to cut off a speaker.

17 DAN MATTHEWS: They die of exhaustion,  
18 infection, shock, or by being eaten by a predator  
19 from whom they can't escape. Some animals even  
20 attempt to chew off their limbs to escape. Trapping  
21 cannot be regulated because only the trappers know  
22 where the traps are. Like for farmers, the trappers  
23 operate outside the view of the law and that is why  
24 lawmakers are banning for. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

115

2 CATHY NAZARI: Hello. Thank you,  
3 Council member Espinal and the committee for allowing  
4 me to speak. My name is Cathy Nazari. I am a board  
5 member of Voters for Animal Rights and the solid  
6 waste advisory board. The barbarity of practices  
7 like scanning and animal alive while fully conscious  
8 should be reason enough to ban the sale of fur. What  
9 impact does it have on the environment and human  
10 health? I included two pages of references for you,  
11 so I won't go into great detail. The World Bank  
12 calls for one of the top five worst industries for  
13 toxic metal pollution. A fur coat takes 20 times  
14 more energy to produce than a faux fur coat. Don't  
15 be misled. European countries have actually banned  
16 for as green advertising because it is false.  
17 Further is heavily dependent on fossil fuels and  
18 electricity, it's intensely polluting to air and  
19 water, kills marine life. For traps capture  
20 endangered species and family pets. For processors  
21 have been fined by the EPA and use at least 14  
22 chemicals classified by the EPA, OSHA, and other  
23 agencies as human antigens causing cancer, leukemia,  
24 hormonal imbalances, and respiratory problems, as  
25 they are absorbed through the skin and nose and

2 remain in the body for 20 years. Forbidden levels  
3 have even been found in children's apparel in the  
4 American Journal of industrial medicine associated  
5 for processing with an increase in women's breast  
6 cancer. Fur puts human health at risk both for the  
7 worker and the consumer. It has no place in our  
8 future or in New York City's Green New Deal. The  
9 Green New Deal is about to change everything. Its  
10 primary goal is to achieve net zero emissions by  
11 eliminating fossil fuels and toxic pollution from our  
12 environment. Manufacturing, agriculture, and other  
13 industries to guarantee clean air and water. And it  
14 aims to protect endangered species. By eliminating  
15 toxic fuels, no one is saying-- fossil fuels. No  
16 one is saying coal miners and oil workers should lose  
17 their jobs. Green New Deals calls for training to  
18 transition these workers to green energy jobs. In  
19 the same way, we would like to say the people who  
20 work with fur transitioned to other textiles. How?  
21 Manhattan borough president, Gail Brewer, created the  
22 garment center steering then Speaker Corey Johnson  
23 and the city Council recently approved a plan that  
24 will help garment workers move into the future. The  
25 city and the Council of Fashion Designers of America

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

117

2 are launching the 14 million dollar expansion of the  
3 fashion manufacturing initiative providing grants to  
4 support existing employees with training to work with  
5 emerging technologies and upgrade equipment and local  
6 manufacturing. What better use than to transition  
7 for workers to new textiles? I've spoken with the  
8 leadership that Parsons School of Fashion who are  
9 interested in discussing--

10 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I'm going to have  
11 to ask you to wrap up.

12 CATHY NAZARI: Can I just finish one  
13 more paragraph?

14 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: It's the second  
15 time it rings, so try to wrap up there.

16 CATHY NAZARI: Okay. Thank you.

17 PRISCILLA FERRELL: Hello. I'm  
18 Priscilla Ferrell, President of Friends of Animals.  
19 We were incorporated in New York City in 1957. When  
20 I started working here in 1974, my first assignment  
21 was to hold a fur protest outside the ASPCA's fur  
22 fashion show at a luncheon on Fifth Avenue. That's  
23 how far we've come since the 1970s. Since the heyday  
24 of fur in New York City. I had a former trapper,  
25 someone with a license, here today to demonstrate two

2 traps, but he didn't get inside. So what I want to  
3 emphasize is what he would've told you about those  
4 trapping devices. The leg hole trap was invented in  
5 1820. It's a 19th Century device. The conibear trap  
6 was invented in 1957. These are sadistic trapping  
7 devices. Not only do they close on an animal's limb,  
8 the real damage to an animal, the suffering occurs  
9 during their struggle to escape. When they are  
10 thrashing around in the steel jaws, they rip tendons,  
11 they fracture bones, they sometimes chew off their  
12 own feet to escape. The conibear trap smashed on  
13 animals that are water animals like beavers. Before  
14 they drown in that trap, their pelvises are crushed.  
15 They are called body-crushing devices. And although  
16 at least one device is widely prohibited outside the  
17 US, they are entirely legal here. The fur industry  
18 is in free fall. This is the time you think about  
19 moral arguments rather than weighing everything  
20 according to economics. The economic value of those  
21 pelts, a beaver in a New York auction now commands 10  
22 dollars. A raccoon seven dollars. A fox eight  
23 dollars. Coyotes 10 dollars. These are throw-away  
24 animals whose lives should mean more. It's important  
25 for our humanity to support 1476 and I ask you to

2 throw your full weight behind it and I thank you so  
3 much for indulging this difficult issue.

4 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Do you  
5 have any questions? I have one question for Dan. In  
6 your testimony, you mentioned some very egregious  
7 ways that these animals were killed. Is that, would  
8 you say, an industry norm? Are there regulations  
9 around whether or not an animal can be killed that  
10 way for its fur? For its pelt?

11 DAN MATTHEWS: All the farms are self-  
12 regulated. The many fur farms and many trappers do  
13 it as a hobby. PETA has gone around the world with  
14 video cameras and we ask the fur farmers to show us  
15 how they do what they're doing. We often say that we  
16 are interested in this whole issue. Interested in  
17 possibly opening a fur far. And they gladly show us  
18 how they do this. This is why all these video that  
19 have changed the world are all over the internet. We  
20 have had to buy out some fur farmers. In Montana, we  
21 had to buy out a beaver farm because they had no  
22 money and the animals were starving to death. We  
23 recently last year bought out a chinchilla farm in  
24 California where the animals were not getting any vet

2 care. It's a completely self-regulated industry, as  
3 are the trap lines.

4 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: So there are no  
5 regulations regulating how these animals can be  
6 killed and whether or not--

7 DAN MATTHEWS: [interposing] That's  
8 right. It's up to them. It's up to them. It's up  
9 to each individual farmer.

10 [Background comments]

11 DAN MATTHEWS: And again--

12 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: All right.

13 DAN MATTHEWS: it never occurred to  
14 them to learn about human euthanasia or get  
15 veterinary training. It's not on their mind.

16 [Background comments]

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: All right. Thank  
18 you. I'm going to call up the next panel. And I'm  
19 going to ask everyone to please keep your voices  
20 down. If you continue being disruptive, I'm going to  
21 have to ask you to leave. Everyone is going to have  
22 a change to say what they have to say. Everyone will  
23 have the chance to testify and when we get to you,  
24 you'll be able to express yourself. Thank you. Up

2 next we have Tom Garcia from Decker Brands and Ted  
3 Potrickus, Retail Council of New York State.

4 TOM GARCIA: Good afternoon. My name is  
5 Tom Garcia and I serve as the Senior Vice President,  
6 General Council and Compliance Officer at Decker's  
7 brands. I would like to thank Speaker Johnson,  
8 Chairman Espinal, as well as members of the committee  
9 to testify before you today. Founded in 1973,  
10 Decker's Brands is a global multi-brand company that  
11 includes footwear brands such as Ugg, Teva, Senook,  
12 and Hoka One One. I'm here to testify today in  
13 regards to Intro 1476 A which prohibits the sale of  
14 fur apparel. The current definition of fur in the  
15 bill means any animal skin in whole or in part with  
16 the hair, fleece, or fur fibers attached. This  
17 definition would prohibit the sale of certain Ugg  
18 brand products, including our iconic UGG classic boot  
19 that contains sheepskin. It is important to  
20 distinguish sheepskin products from luxury fur  
21 products such as fox, lynx, and mink that this  
22 legislation is seeking to ban. Sheepskin, like  
23 leather, is a byproduct of food production, making it  
24 fundamentally different from luxury fur products. On  
25 May 8, Speaker Johnson framed the byproduct

2 distinction in explaining that the current bill would  
3 not apply to leather by saying leather is a coproduct  
4 of meat, so, right now, if you are killing lynx or  
5 chinchilla or coyote or fur, you are not eating meat.  
6 In light of this important distinction, we believe a  
7 byproduct exemption for sheepskin should be included  
8 in this legislation. Simply put, sheepskin is just  
9 like leather. It is important to note that the hides  
10 would otherwise be discarded or not incorporated into  
11 products-- if they are not incorporated into  
12 products. Utilizing them as a more sustainable  
13 approach. It is for these reasons that other  
14 jurisdictions with for bans such as Los Angeles, San  
15 Francisco, and the city of Berkeley have exempted  
16 sheepskin from the definition of fur. There is also  
17 a bill in the New York State assembly sponsored by  
18 assembly member Rosenthal that bans the sale of fur,  
19 but includes an exemption for sheepskin in the  
20 definition of fur. We are committed to sourcing our  
21 material in a sustainable way as evidenced by our  
22 ethical sourcing and animal welfare policy, which is  
23 posted on our website. Additionally, Decker's Brands  
24 is part of an animal welfare group within a leather  
25 working group which is made up of member brands,

2 retailers, and leather manufactures that work  
3 together to develop industry best practices. We urge  
4 the Council to amend the legislation to include an  
5 exemption for sheepskin from the definition of fur  
6 and we look forward to working with the Council on  
7 this issue.

8 TED POTRIKUS: Thank you. Good  
9 afternoon, Chairman Espinal and Member Cabrera.  
10 Thank you for having us here. My name is Ted  
11 Potrikus. I am President and CEO of the Retail  
12 Council of New York State. We're the state's leading  
13 trade association for the retail industry  
14 representing member stores in New York City and  
15 across the state ranging from the smallest  
16 independence to the nation's best known brands.  
17 Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today on  
18 1476 A. We share the concerns raised in the  
19 introduction regarding the sourcing of fur currently  
20 available for sale and indoors, without reservation,  
21 the restriction of fur produced without regard for  
22 animal welfare. We submit, respectfully, the product  
23 bans no longer are an effective tool to affect  
24 permanent change within the supply chain. Shoppers  
25 in 2019 demand choice and, literally, within the

2 palms of their hands they have more options than ever  
3 before as to where, when, and how they shop. It's  
4 easy for today's shopper to evade any ban on any  
5 product. Unable to find what they want in New York  
6 City, they simply will go to another state, city, or  
7 online to buy what they choose. This Council has the  
8 opportunity to preserve that coveted customer choice  
9 and drive real and sustainable change that was the  
10 fact the fur marketplace beyond the city's border.  
11 To that end, we urge you to incorporate certain  
12 provisions found in related measures approved in Los  
13 Angeles and elsewhere, including allowing the sale of  
14 shearling and cattle hair and an effective date of  
15 January 1, 2021. In addition, we think that strictly  
16 regulated practices in New York would reduce and,  
17 quite possibly, eliminate bad actors throughout the  
18 global supply chain. Codified standards in the  
19 sourcing of fur sold in New York City would require  
20 suppliers from around the world to exceed to certain  
21 assessments. And surely, suppliers would want their  
22 products to be available for sale in New York City,  
23 one of the world's top shopping destinations, and  
24 would redouble their efforts to ensure they meet the  
25 city's requirements. We reiterate our support to

2 restrict the sale of fur produced without regard for  
3 animal welfare and today offer our pledge as an  
4 industry to work constructively with you towards a  
5 solution that preserves animal welfare and customer  
6 choice. We hope to be your partner in ensuring full  
7 and rigorous compliance. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Thank  
9 you.

10 TED POTRIKUS: Thank you very much.

11 [Background comments]

12 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Up next we have  
13 Rodney King, Mark Bauer, Stewart Mitchell, Cynthia  
14 King, and Elsa Lebowitz.

15 [Background comments]

16 Good afternoon, Council persons. Thank  
17 you. My name is Rodney King. I'm here as a private  
18 citizen. I'm a native Brooklynite, husband and  
19 father and someone who comes to you today to speak in  
20 strong support of 1476, a measure to ban the sale of  
21 fur products in New York City. My purpose today is  
22 to speak not only as a proponent for the humane and  
23 ethical treatment of animals, but as an African-  
24 American man, I am here to dispel some of the myths  
25 that may be propagated here today. And stereotypes

2 of how we, African-Americans, and more specifically  
3 black men, think when it comes to issues such as  
4 this. I come from a people who are too often been  
5 portrayed by the largest society in general of people  
6 who are incapable of a broad range of feelings and  
7 emotions were as incapable of showing compassion for  
8 others, much less, creatures described as lesser than  
9 us. Being not much more than brutish creatures  
10 ourselves. African-Americans have indeed routinely  
11 been denied the ability to achieve the so-called  
12 status so often reserved often for many white  
13 Americans. And so, when the obstacles to those  
14 achievements are overcome, it is indeed something to  
15 be celebrated and cherished. However, immersing  
16 ourselves in the outward trappings and arraignment of  
17 this so-called status does nothing to actually  
18 achieve any achievement at all. And only serves to  
19 reinforce long-held beliefs that we are backwards  
20 thinking juvenile people who are more concerned with  
21 material goods in obtaining the many bobbles and  
22 trinkets of our former oppressors that were so long  
23 denied to us as opposed to obtaining the true  
24 signifiers of achievement, a good education, good  
25 job, decent living conditions, decent healthcare, and

2 a just and fair criminal justice system and respect

3 of our neighbors and peers. Please don't fall for

4 the okey-doke. Please don't be bamboozled. Okay?

5 It is incumbent upon you for you to act upon your

6 conscience and not be intimidated by political fear.

7 By those who would use subterfuge to make you believe

8 that this is somehow racial or religious issue.

9 MARK BAUER: Hello, everyone. Thank you

10 for letting me speak here today. My name is Mark

11 Bauer. I am a New York fashion designer. I have a

12 successful business here in New York City. We do not

13 sell or design anything using real fur. I am

14 fortunate to dress some very famous women like

15 Angelina Jolie, Beyoncé, Oprah, Shania Twain, Mariah

16 Carey, Emily Blunt, and Tyra Banks just to name a

17 few. Many who seek out for like alternatives, I am

18 only too happy to show them. We New Yorkers do not

19 hunt animals for food. We New Yorkers do not live in

20 caves. There is no good reason to wear real fur on

21 our bodies to keep us warm. Technology has given us

22 incredible faux fur if we so chose to wear fur.

23 Animals that a bread of fur farms specifically for

24 their skins live in horrific cage conditions. They

25 are anally electrocuted causing unimaginable

2 suffering. Many don't actually die from this process  
3 and are often skinned while they are still alive. In  
4 places like China, they are just skinned, peeled, and  
5 tossed alive into writhing piles to die a slow,  
6 agonizing death. All these poor animals, like us  
7 humans, bond and protect their young. They, just  
8 like us, experience fear, pain, and suffering. There  
9 is absolutely no excuse for cruelty to animals.

10 Anyone that profits from the sale of fur is  
11 perpetuating cruelty to animals. Anyone wearing real  
12 first sends a message of vanity. They just don't  
13 care. So I am asking you, New Yorkers, please care.  
14 We New Yorkers are the heroes of compassion and  
15 change. Please, New York, be the heroes for the  
16 suffering animals and ban the sale of fur in New  
17 York. Real fur belongs--

18 [Background comments]

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

20 MARK BAUER: on the animal's body and not  
21 on ours. Thank you.

22 CYNTHIA KING: Thank you, honorable  
23 council members. My name is Cynthia King. I am a  
24 business owner, a teacher, a wife, proud wife, and  
25 mother, and a voter. I'm speaking today on behalf of

2 New York City Hip Hop is Green. Hip Hop is Green is  
3 a pioneering movement led by a team of artists and  
4 performers that use the power and influence of hip-  
5 hop to speak to youth and spark positive changes in  
6 their lives. First symbolizes inhumanity, captivity,  
7 oppression, and violence. We refute any notion that  
8 fur has some specific cultural importance as we know  
9 that, unfortunately, status seeking and materialism  
10 belongs to many cultures. We work to empower our  
11 young people with things of true value: empathy,  
12 compassion, healthy habits, and a good education. We  
13 teach them to avoid following detrimental trends like  
14 the excessive spending, especially on things that  
15 they been convinced represents success, achievement,  
16 luxury, but really only empower the owners, the  
17 industry, people who do not uplift our community.  
18 The fur industry is a cruel and barbaric one and all  
19 cruelty is linked directly or indirectly with every  
20 type of violent crime. Domestic violence, child  
21 abuse, spouse abuse, and elder abuse is closely  
22 associated with animal cruelty. Perpetrators use  
23 animal cruelty to control women and children in  
24 abusive situations. The connection between animal  
25 cruelty and violence is indisputable. The fur

2 industry is animal cruelty. We must not turn a blind  
3 eye to an industry that perpetuates violence. The  
4 exact opposite of what our community needs. We must  
5 embrace this moment of progress and ban the sale of  
6 fur in our city. We know New York City leaves the  
7 world, although LA is ahead of us a little bit on  
8 this one. The fur industry has sunk to a new low.  
9 To try to maintain profits and relevance, they feign  
10 concern for communities that they see only as a  
11 revenue source, not as a genuine ally or partner. It  
12 is common sense that we should try to alleviate  
13 suffering whenever we can. We commend speaker  
14 Johnson on his courageous and compassionate  
15 leadership and you all. New York City Hip Hop is  
16 Green supports Intro 1476. Thank you for the  
17 opportunity to speak today.

18 STEWART MITCHELL: Thank you for allowing  
19 me to speak. My name is Stewart Mitchell. I live in  
20 the Bedford I the second section of Brooklyn, the 30  
21 sixth district which is Robert E. Koenig Junior's  
22 district. The world around us is changing. People  
23 are starting to make more ethical choices concerning  
24 the environment and the welfare of others species.  
25 People started to use less plastic because of the

2 effect it has on our oceans and ocean life. People  
3 are starting to gravitate towards more plant-based  
4 alternatives to milk and meat because people are  
5 starting to realize the ill effects that factory  
6 farming animals for meat has on the environment and  
7 the planet. A fur ban in New York City is a step in  
8 the same ethical direction that all other industries  
9 are moving towards. New York has long been  
10 considered a fashion mecca. We have always set the  
11 pace for everyone else to keep up with those far as  
12 fashion is concerned, but, unfortunately, this is the  
13 one time we are falling behind in everybody else is  
14 moving ahead. Think of the impact we would have on  
15 the world if we said no to fur for fashion. For  
16 farms all over the world are already closing. Cities  
17 like Los Angeles, San Francisco, and West Hollywood  
18 are already on board here in the United States for  
19 banding for sales. Famous designers like verse  
20 Saatchi, Michael Cortez, Armani, Gucci, and so many  
21 others are already saying no to fur. We are behind.  
22 In 2019, wearing the skin of an innocent animal is  
23 unacceptable. There are more sustainable  
24 alternatives to stay warm and be fashionable and that  
25 don't exploit animals for what is rightfully theirs.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

162

2 Two years ago, my daughter asked me to buy her a  
3 Canada Goose coat. I told her, times, you know I'd  
4 do anything for you, but you are not getting that  
5 code.

6 [Laughter]

7 STEWART MITCHELL: You have a choice.

8 Animals don't have a choice to become a fabric. I  
9 explained to her how coyotes are trapped in their  
10 habitat and killed for their fur to make the fur trim  
11 on the hood and after I explained this to her, she  
12 didn't want the coat anymore, but then she asked me,  
13 daddy, why don't they just use fake fur? And that's a  
14 question I have for everyone here. Why are we not  
15 using fake fur? Animals are not items that we have  
16 to end this barbaric tradition of scanning them alive  
17 for one is rightfully theirs and I support Intro 1476  
18 A and also want to say that as a descendent of  
19 African slaves who were brought here and used as a  
20 commodity, it is disturbing for me to watch other  
21 fellow sentient beings have their freedom taken away  
22 from them and used as a commodity for the gain-- the  
23 monetary gain of others.

24 CYNTHIA KING: Tell it.

25 [Applause]

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

163

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Please hold. Hold  
3 your applause, please.

4 [Background comments]

5 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you guys.

6 [Background comments]

7 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Maria Ryche, Alicia  
8 George, Frank Siller and Justin Siller. Nick  
9 Palagorses. Palagorges.

10 [Background comments]

11 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Maria Ryche, Alicia  
12 George, Frank Siller, and Nick Palagorges.

13 LEGAL COUNSEL: Why don't you just call  
14 this guy? [inaudible 02:51:34] doesn't show up.

15 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: John Gorgedes.

16 [background comments]

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: You may begin.

18 JUSTIN SILLER: Hi. My name is Justin  
19 Siller and I am the co-owner of Staten Island Furrier  
20 and the way our brick-and-mortar store and I  
21 understand the concerns of the other side. I will  
22 tell you this. I am a father. I am married. I have  
23 three small children. I have a mortgage. I have  
24 school tuition. Where good, decent human beings who  
25 work very, very hard and if this ban goes through,

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

161

2 the psychology that you talked about with the  
3 animals, I'm thinking of the human psychology of the  
4 people in this industry. The more than 7000 in the  
5 city and all across the country because I can see the  
6 writing on the wall right now. We have to be  
7 protected. We are humans and we have to be  
8 protected. Thank you.

9 [Applause]

10 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Please. Please  
11 hold your applause again. Hopefully this is the last  
12 time I will say this.

13 FRANK SILLER: My name is Frank Siller.  
14 I am co-owner of Staten Island Furrier. This is my  
15 son here. I will say that, you know, listening to so  
16 many people speak into the specifics, there is not  
17 one furrier here that wouldn't follow better  
18 guidelines that I would say. There is not a store  
19 here, of for store here that wouldn't follow better  
20 guidelines that we could work together to create a  
21 more humane way to run our industry, to raise furs,  
22 and to take furs. That being said, many people here  
23 made up a lot of stories on how a lot of people raise  
24 their furs. They had to go to China to talk about  
25 how some furs were raised. This is America and most

2 people in America raise it the proper way. Those who  
3 don't, should be put away. Absolutely should be put  
4 away. That being said, some people here will not  
5 stop until you or you can have a pocketbook or a belt  
6 or shoes or I can't eat me or decide to have a  
7 chicken for dinner. They will not be happy until  
8 that happens. Our fur industry is willing to make  
9 changes to make it a better environment. Absolutely.  
10 And I want to say another thing. Most people in the  
11 fur business are community people. They are involved  
12 in their communities. I will speak with our store  
13 here on Staten Island that we, over the last 10 years  
14 have donated over 150,000 dollars to the homeless and  
15 to help feed them and house them in project  
16 hospitality, which I know many people in your  
17 legislative know all about project hospitality and  
18 the beautiful work that Rev. Troy does. We are  
19 involved in many different levels. Many times you  
20 hear about it and many times you don't. We are part  
21 of our communities. We are family. It is a family  
22 business. Generation after generation have been in  
23 this business and a lot of them cannot transfer or  
24 cannot be taught something else. This is what they  
25 know and this is what they can do. You know what?

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

166

2 It's a decent business. Whether you like it or not,  
3 it's a good business. And I don't think anyone has  
4 the right to come in here and tell me that I am doing  
5 something wrong when I know I am not doing something  
6 wrong when I care about human beings. Thank you.

7 [Applause]

8 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Again. Again,  
9 guys. We are not allowing applause in the chambers.  
10 Just raise your hand. Shake them in the air. You  
11 can do that. Just not applaud. Thank you.

12 JOHN GEORGIADES: My name is John  
13 Georgiades and I represent Stallion INC., a New York  
14 City economic development Corporation funded  
15 manufacturing company. We are the manufacturer and  
16 retailer of women's fur coats and ready to wear  
17 apparel. [inaudible 02:55:56] says that  
18 approximately 30 million and we have three retail  
19 stores and our factories in Long Island city. We  
20 moved to Long Island city. We have 90 employees that  
21 represented by Council members here. We moved to  
22 Long Island city in 2007 and then funded our current  
23 production facility with financing provided by the  
24 New York City industrial development group. The  
25 financing was provided because we improved the

2 economic and employment conditions in the area. Our  
3 number of employees has doubled over the last 12  
4 years. In 2015, filled New York City business  
5 Corporation refinanced our building with over 7  
6 million of revenue refunding bonds. Substantial  
7 portions of the project were used to improve our  
8 building and provide additional resources specific to  
9 the fur business. If New York City decides to ban  
10 fur, it will have a catastrophic impact on our  
11 operations. We will be forced to close a factory and  
12 retail stores in New York City and elsewhere all of  
13 our employees would be let go without severance pay  
14 and benefits including medical insurance, which are  
15 provided to our employees at no cost to them. We're  
16 going to default on 8 million in obligations on the  
17 New York City revenue refunding bonds. All costs  
18 associated with our store leases of over 3 million  
19 dollars will be lost. We will be in default of our  
20 working capital debt of over 6 million and our  
21 inventory supply contracts will be abandoned and that  
22 will result in a myriad of lawsuits. We will default  
23 and our multimillion a year Madison Avenue leases  
24 which will result in huge liability. Our 90  
25 employees with families who are dependent on them

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

169

2 will lose their livelihoods because you have decided  
3 to put our industry out of business. You funded this  
4 business with the industrial revenue bonds and now  
5 you want to take it away. How does that make sense?

6 ALISHA GEORGE: Hi. I'm Alisha George  
7 and I represent Stallion INC. my speech I had  
8 prepared I can no longer speak because after I heard  
9 all that was said earlier, it's very disheartening to  
10 me. I came here as an immigrant from the Caribbean  
11 and I came here in pursuit of the American dream.  
12 And, because of the fur industry, I was afforded  
13 that. Today I look and I'm afraid that my dream will  
14 be shattered because you have a very small group who  
15 are more concerned about animals than-- A community  
16 to me is human life. When I am listening to everyone  
17 more concerned about the welfare of an animal, how  
18 about the human beings? There is so much you can do  
19 for the community today. When I see homeless people  
20 setting, I see people dying from cancer and you're  
21 telling me you are concerned about an animal that is  
22 being caged, really? I am concerned to-- Yes. An  
23 animal has afforded me in my lifestyle today. The  
24 death of it. I understand that. I understand and I  
25 get you have the right to care for animals. Have

2 them as your pets. I understand that. I love  
3 animals, too. But, you know why? I cannot see how  
4 an animal--

5 [Background comments]

6 ALISHA GEORGE: I love them. I wear  
7 them. I love them. Absolutely. I love them.  
8 Wearing them on my back. Yes. I'm a love of fur.  
9 But I tell you what. If you are telling me animals  
10 are much more of concern to you than the people you  
11 are looking at. The people who have worked so hard  
12 to build and give the growth in New York today, my  
13 dear friend, Councilman, I cannot believe you're the  
14 one that I'm looking for to to make New York the  
15 place and I want to be in. Thank you.

16 [Applause]

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: All right, guys.  
18 No clapping. Please. Just a quick question. You  
19 mentioned earlier about where you-- about the firm  
20 being sourced from different parts of the world.  
21 Where do you source your fur from and how do you  
22 verify that your fur is not coming from China, for  
23 example?

24 FRANK SILLER: Well, they are fur  
25 labeled. And that was something that was discussed

2 today that you said or some of the experts said that  
3 we could improve on that and that will be improved  
4 upon.

5 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: So they're fur  
6 labeled?

7 JUSTIN SILLER: Yes. They are.

8 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Can you go into  
9 that a little bit more? How do you purchase your  
10 fur? How do you know where it comes from when you  
11 fur label it? Where you get it?

12 JUSTIN SILLER: We have partners that we  
13 work with in this city, wholesalers and manufacturers  
14 that we buy from that have the country of origin.  
15 And then, when we sell it, retail, we have to put on  
16 the tag, the ticket, the country of origin. Where  
17 the pelts are from.

18 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Are you able to  
19 trace back which farms the--

20 JUSTIN SILLER: [interposing] Are you  
21 asking me if I go to the farms? No.

22 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: That's not what I  
23 asked. I asked are you able to track which fur--  
24 What--

2 JUSTIN SILLER: [interposing] Well, I  
3 trust my business partners, yes, in New York City who  
4 are regulated as they discussed at the first panel  
5 today.

6 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Okay. Thank you.

7 FRANK SILLER: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I want to call up  
9 Michelle Villa Gomez, ASPCA, Brian Shapiro from  
10 Humane Society of the US, Edita Birnkrant from  
11 NYCLASS, Sugan Goel Agrawall from Goonez, New York.  
12 Anna Tagliabue from Pelush.

13 [Background comments]

14 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: You may begin.

15 SUGAN AUGARWAL: Dear Council members, I  
16 am Sugan Augarwal and I live in Long Island City. I  
17 started my company in 2009. My brand is called Gunas  
18 (sp?) New York and I have been committed to make  
19 luxury, vegan, cruelty handbags for the modern style,  
20 conscious, and fashion forward woman. My brand has  
21 been awarded the best green handbag by InStyle, best  
22 retail bag by Macy's, best vegan handbag brand by  
23 PETA. The brand has been featured in Vogue Magazine,  
24 Harper's Bazaar, Let's Make a Deal TV show, and a  
25 bunch of other TV shows on Netflix. I'm here today

2 to testify in support for the ban on sale of fur in  
3 New York City with primarily three strong arguments.

4 One, plastics, in my opinion, are a genius human  
5 invention. Unlike plastic straws and bottles that  
6 are a convenience tool and can easily be avoided.

7 Faux fur and faux leather are a genius use of  
8 plastics. Using plastics as faux fur is an

9 adaptation of nature, a way to make its beauty

10 instead of destroying it. Several innovations and

11 the form of firm made from hemp fibers, corn-based

12 plastic, water-based faux material instead of

13 petrochemicals, and even plastic made from avocados

14 seeds are now being developed by scientists all over

15 the world. Let's not be a creature of habit rather

16 than-- rather an evangelist of change. The change

17 that is the need of the hour. Let's stop the abuse

18 of animals in the name of fashion. Point two,

19 ethical jobs will be created. There comes a time

20 when an industry no longer serves the purpose of

21 humankind. We are at this very crossroad with the

22 fur industry. Instead of fearing change, we need to

23 embrace it, and of a, and give our future generations

24 what they really want. There is a clear, growing

25 demand for animal free products. As a small business

2 owner, the growing success of my brand is a clear  
3 indication that the millennial and Gen Z consumers  
4 want this change. We want to have nothing to do with  
5 garments made from brutality. No amount of  
6 regulation in the fur industry can justify the  
7 torture, abuse, and pain being inflicted upon  
8 animals. Point three, diviners, big and small, do  
9 not support the use of foreign fashion. New York is  
10 one of the top four world capitals for fashion. What  
11 values do we want to stand for? Torture cannot be  
12 labeled as a statically, morally, and visually  
13 pleasing. Animal abuse is modern-day slavery. Let's  
14 livery them by creating incentives similar to those  
15 embraced through several other green initiatives by  
16 our city. As a mom, as an immigrant, I want this  
17 kind of world for my child and as a business owner I  
18 know it can be done. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

20 EDITA BIRNKRANT: Thank you, Chairman  
21 Espinal. My name is Edita Birnkrant and I am the  
22 Executive Director of NYCLASS, and animal advocacy  
23 and political action nonprofit organization based in  
24 New York City and I am a resident of Queens. And  
25 NYCLASS is strongly in support of Intro 1476 and we

2 applaud Speaker Corey Johnson for introducing this  
3 important bill that confronts and outlaws the sale of  
4 a form of hideous animal cruelty, as we've already  
5 heard today. And already mentioned was the citywide  
6 Mason-Dixon poll of registered voters conducted this  
7 month and found that an overwhelming majority of New  
8 Yorkers, 75 percent, support the ban and the  
9 breakdown of people polled was 74 percent of  
10 Democrats, 71 percent of Republicans, and 79 percent  
11 of independents all wanted to see the ban of fur go  
12 forth. And these polling results, to me, speak  
13 volumes about the fact that how we treat animals as a  
14 society and as a city is truly nonpartisan. Even  
15 people at total opposite ends of the political  
16 spectrum agree almost equally that the immense  
17 violence and cruelty to animals inherent in each  
18 piece of fur means that it should be unacceptable to  
19 sell the products of such torture in the year 2019 in  
20 New York City. And I don't use the word torture  
21 lately. We have already heard from vets and many  
22 other people about the torture that is inherent in  
23 fur and the over 100 million animals every year that  
24 are electrocuted, gassed, poisoned, legend, trapped  
25 in the wild, and skinned just for their fur. And the

2 many toxic chemicals that are then necessary to treat  
3 the pile, making the fur industry a menace to, not  
4 only animals, but the environment. And the animals  
5 that these-- The agony in that the use animals and  
6 door, including dogs and cats and many other wild  
7 animals, is undeniable. And how can we continue to  
8 justify such cruelty for fur collars, coats, or  
9 accessories when ethical opportunities abound and we  
10 have already heard from designers who are doing just  
11 that. Providing those ethical alternatives. These  
12 are the reasons many top designers and retailers are  
13 shunning fur and that consumer trends have been  
14 declining and we hope that the committee votes yes.  
15 Thank you.

16 ANNA TAGLIABUE: My name is Anna  
17 Tagliabue. I'm the founder of Pelush, a zero waste  
18 faux fur clothing company based in New York City.  
19 Today we can accurately imitate any kind of animals  
20 for existing in nature and even invent new ones. We  
21 are in the middle of a fur revolution or, as I call  
22 it, a right-volution. Fox, mink, chinchilla,  
23 [inaudible 03:07:20], coyote, rabbit, lamb. All  
24 these beautiful creatures don't have to be  
25 slaughtered for vanity. In many cases, their fur is

2 used as an accent, not even providing warmth for  
3 clothing. Technology has rendered this obsolete and  
4 now we can celebrate our beloved animals as  
5 inspiration with exciting new high-tech technology  
6 textiles that have replaced the need to kill animals  
7 for fur. It's very simple. There should be no  
8 confusion about it. There is no gray area. There is  
9 a right and there is wrong. In killing animals for  
10 fashion sink is wrong. How can we justify wearing  
11 real fair in the 20 first century? I have devoted 20  
12 years of my life developing the antidote to this  
13 cruelty. Before that, I worked in the high-end  
14 luxury fashion industry selling animal furs until I  
15 had the life-changing epiphany and realize that my  
16 industry was really a killing machine. Profiting  
17 from the barbaric and antiquated trade in cruelty. I  
18 remember the first time discovering imitation for  
19 textiles and immediately seeing the vast potential of  
20 such product. They are beautiful and innovative like  
21 something from the future. I thought to myself, if  
22 we can reproduce some things so beautiful that looks  
23 and feels like real fair, why do we have to enslave,  
24 exploit, torture, and kill innocent animals for  
25 vanity? So I began researching and reinvented my

2 career in fashion is a mission not only to create  
3 beautiful functional clothing, but to ensure that  
4 they are free from cruelty, suffering, and blood.  
5 Please, respected member of New York city Council, do  
6 the right thing. Make the right choice. There is no  
7 confusion. Animal fire is immoral, unethical,  
8 unsustainable, and completely unnecessary. It's very  
9 simple. It's wrong. Thank you.

10 [Background comments]

11 MICHELLE VILLA GOMEZ: Good afternoon. I  
12 am Michelle Villa Gomez, New York City Legislative  
13 Senior Director for the American Society for the  
14 Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the ASPCA. I'd  
15 like to thank the consumer affairs committee and  
16 Chairman Espinal for the opportunity to share the  
17 ASPCA's position on fur. While the ASPCA is known  
18 widely for a long history of work with companion  
19 animals, we believe that all animals should live free  
20 from abuse and suffering. Our official policy and  
21 position statement states that the ASPCA is opposed  
22 to the farming, ranching, trapping, shooting, or  
23 otherwise killing of furbearing animals for clothing  
24 and accessories. For this reason, we support the  
25 effort of the bill sponsors, Speaker Johnson, Council

2 member Levine, and are grateful for their leadership  
3 in rejecting the for-profit suffering of vulnerable  
4 animals for fashion. Consumers need to be empowered  
5 to make ethical and sustainable choices. Many  
6 designers have been moving away from using fur in the  
7 last several years and many of them have been  
8 outlined in previous testimony. Bans on the sale of  
9 fur have been instituted in Austria, the UK, in the  
10 Netherlands, as well as Los Angeles and San Francisco  
11 here in the United States. We have an opportunity to  
12 prevent animals like raccoons, foxes, mink, and  
13 chinchillas from suffering from cruel and inhumane  
14 treatment and for farms here and abroad. We applaud  
15 your close examination of this important policy  
16 question. Thank you.

17 BRIAN SCHAPIRO: Thanks, Michelle. Thank  
18 you, Chairman Espinal and honorable committee  
19 members. As the New York State Director for the  
20 Humane Society of the United States, thank you for  
21 the opportunity to present today and also for the  
22 leadership shown by Speaker Johnson. I will keep my  
23 statement short. There's many people who wish to  
24 speak. The HSUS has worked with companies from  
25 Gucci, Michael Kors, Chanel, TJ Maxx, and Burlington

2 Coat Factory in order to find a more humane and  
3 profitable way for them to continue to sell products.  
4 When these companies stop and think about it and make  
5 such a significant policies change, it's based on the  
6 fact that they've come to the conclusion there is not  
7 any way to humanely source fur. I mean, just  
8 speaking honestly and plainly, I had to pinch myself  
9 earlier when we're having a discussion that anal  
10 electrocution is acceptable or maybe considered  
11 humane because a scientist somewhere says that. You  
12 know, culturally and historically, we have put our  
13 faith in scientists who say such things in the past  
14 and, at times, it is not turned out so well. With  
15 that said, consumers, industry leaders, leading  
16 animal protection organizations, and constituents  
17 applaud the introduction of 1476 A and respectfully  
18 ask that this measure passed committee. Thank you  
19 for your consideration and for your service to the  
20 people in New York City.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Be quiet, please.

22 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

23 BRIAN SHAPIRO: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Up next we have

25 Reverend Doctor Johnny Green, Robert Cahill, Jack

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

120

2 Cohen, Kristen Kern, and Norman Ambrose. Doctor  
3 Johnny Green, Robert Cahill, Jack Cohen, Kristen  
4 Kern, and Norman Ambrose. You may begin.

5 KRISTEN KERN: Good afternoon. My name  
6 is Kristen Kern and on behalf of the American Apparel  
7 and Footwear Association, I thank you for the  
8 opportunity to testify on Into 1476 A. AAFA is the  
9 national trade association representing apparel,  
10 footwear, travel goods, and other sewn products  
11 companies and their suppliers which compete in the  
12 global market. We were present over 100 companies  
13 with corporate offices or headquarters in New York  
14 State which would be impacted by the sale on animal  
15 skin or fur products. This legislation would greatly  
16 impair our company's ability to deliver products that  
17 consumers want. The choice of materials used in  
18 apparel and footwear products is important and  
19 consumers make educated decisions about the types of  
20 products that they purchase. When a consumer demand  
21 exists, the product is there to supply the demand.  
22 And when demands change, companies adapt. Regulating  
23 material choices for companies artificially restricts  
24 trade and will drive business out of the city and to  
25 surrounding areas. Because the demand for fur will

2 still exist, it's likely that most consumers will  
3 continue to buy fur whether it is sold in New York  
4 City or elsewhere. Moreover, this legislation will  
5 cause a loss of jobs and closure of small business  
6 manufacturers in the city. Dictating elements of  
7 style and design may also negatively impact fashion  
8 tradeshows which frequently travel to New York City  
9 and threatens New York City's status as an  
10 international fashion capital. This also risks and  
11 negative impact on tourism and shopping, a major  
12 source of revenue for New York City businesses.  
13 Additionally, AAFA advocates for the harmonization of  
14 regulations at the city, state, and federal levels.  
15 Numerous and conflicting regulations from one  
16 locality to the next increases the cost of doing  
17 business, especially for companies who sell in many  
18 different product categories, many of our companies  
19 do. Of course, increasing the cost of businesses by  
20 requiring companies to track changing regulations,  
21 update their compliance policies, and develop new  
22 products increases the cost of products for  
23 consumers. We recommend that the Council reconsider  
24 this legislation which will limit consumer choice,

2 kill jobs, and hurt New York City's economy. Thank  
3 you for your time and consideration.

4                   NORMAN AMBROSE: Good afternoon. Good  
5 afternoon. My name is Norman Ambrose and I am a  
6 designer and small business owner here in our great  
7 city of New York. Working in fashion has been a  
8 lifelong pursuit, one that has taken me on an  
9 incredible journey of amazing highs and extreme lows.  
10 As we can all relate, life can be tough, full of hard  
11 times, and when I fell on at times, with the help of  
12 the local furrier, family business owner, and  
13 manufacturer that embraced me and my talents  
14 supporting my label and paying me a working wage. We  
15 are in an industry of inclusion and unity. One made  
16 up of many races, nationalities, religions, and  
17 orientations. We are New Yorkers. Today, I am the  
18 thousands of New Yorkers who will be affected by this  
19 bill are united to stand up for our livelihood, the  
20 environment, our freedom of choice, and for social  
21 justice. Fashion, as an industry, is the second most  
22 polluting industry in the world. Every year, only  
23 one percent of new clothing made is of recycled  
24 materials and 74 percent of new clothing either ends  
25 up in landfills or is burned. The United Nations

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

123

2 called upon the general public in a tweet this past

3 February that all of us as a global community need to

4 make better choices when it comes to the clothing we

5 purchase by choosing natural materials. My brand

6 believes in sustainability and reducing the amount of

7 man-made fibers that pollute our environment.

8 Dioxins, vinyl chloride, dichlorides, ethylene, led.

9 These are all components of faux fur. The majority

10 of faux fur. And I remind you, they do not

11 biodegrade. Sustainability and the environment are

12 at the forefront of mainstream industry. A major

13 conscious shift is taking place within our society to

14 evaluate the impact on the environment. Our very own

15 Mayor DiBlasio has been working on the Green New Deal

16 calling for the reduction of omission as I quote from

17 past Monday, the Green New Deal is here to stay.

18 It's bold, audacious, necessary. He is talking about

19 100 percent renewable energy, assuming things can be

20 different. On this relating to reducing pollution in

21 our environment. You call out Trump and what he's

22 doing to the climate and yet here we are fighting for

23 the right to use a natural material where your

24 proposed alternative is a polluting plastic. How is

25 that helping our environment? If anything, it's a

2 complete contradiction. To give time to fellow  
3 members, I will stop there, but thank you for your  
4 time.

5                   ROBERT CAHILL:     Good day, Mr. Chairman.  
6 Thank you for the time to speak today. My name is  
7 Robert Cahill. I'm a Senior Vice President of North  
8 American Fur Auctions. Our company traces its roots  
9 back to 1670, 350 years and the establishment of the  
10 Hudson Bay Fur Trading Company. We currently have  
11 operations in the United States, Canada, and Europe.  
12 And our company has advocated for and has supported  
13 financially over decades the best practices in terms  
14 of humane trapping standards, which you will hear  
15 from wildlife experts who are here today to speak,  
16 and also the development of-- the ongoing  
17 development of for farming practices. When I would  
18 like to say is the trapping is undertaken in  
19 virtually every country in the world for many  
20 reasons, including scientific research, relocation.  
21 These traps are used to capture animals and relocate  
22 them. Disease control, problem wildlife and  
23 ecosystem management. Essentially, wildfire is the  
24 byproduct of wildlife management and contributes  
25 hundreds of millions of dollars into the rural

2 economies of the United States and Canada through  
3 commercial trapping. And this includes licensed  
4 trappers and tens of thousands of indigenous  
5 trappers. In fact, Mr. Chairman, it was our company  
6 that set those quotas that the Speaker talked about  
7 in terms of conservation in the early 1800s. It was  
8 our company that actually set those up recognizing  
9 populations were reducing. We collect fur from the  
10 trappers in the farmers where it is sorted by type,  
11 color, size, quality and sold to the world buyers who  
12 use the fur for any reason. To our auction house,  
13 100 percent of our furs can be traced back to the  
14 person who produces those furs. So, that is one of  
15 the things we are working through. Is taking that  
16 traceability system all the way through from that  
17 producer to the retailer and to a consumer. And, in  
18 fact, we have some test cases where we are doing that  
19 with certain customers right now. The U.S. Fish and  
20 Wildlife agency plays a significant role in the  
21 oversight of this, as well as other agencies. Then I  
22 would say that the quality of the fur has a direct  
23 relationship to the health of that animal that is  
24 either raised or produced. In North American states  
25 and provinces are world leaders in the development of

2 humane trapping standards and implementing and  
3 enforcing wildlife management systems that ensure  
4 that the harvest is sustainable. Our company has  
5 been here for 350 years and wildlife management will  
6 continue in every state in the United States  
7 regardless of where there are fur trade. If furs  
8 never used again in a fur coat, the wildlife  
9 management will continue. We have multiple examples  
10 of states and countries that don't use the fur that  
11 are continuing to manage the wildlife at taxpayers'  
12 dollars. So what's happening is, and you can hear  
13 that what we've heard is that it's going to end and  
14 we should save this. The reality is there countries  
15 all around the world-- I heard last week the United  
16 Kingdom, 400,000 red fox in the United Kingdom are  
17 harvested every year. Not one is used. This is  
18 management. So, it's a case of either it's going to  
19 be used--

20 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: [interposing] I'm  
21 going to have to ask you to wrap up.

22 ROBERT CAHILL: Yep. But if you--

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: But if you have--

24 ROBERT CAHILL: It's going to be used by  
25 expert people--

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: If you have  
3 testimony, and we can submit it for the record.

4 ROBERT CAHILL: Yeah. I will. And to  
5 produce a product or taxpayers are going to be paying  
6 for that and that's the reality that you really need  
7 to look into before you make this decision. Thank  
8 you.

9 DR. JOHNNIE GREEN: Good afternoon and  
10 thank you for the opportunity to testify before the  
11 committee regarding my position to the proposed ban  
12 on the sale of for apparel, Intro 1476. My name is  
13 Dr. Johnnie Green and I'm the Senior Pastor of Mount  
14 Neboh Baptist Church in Harlem. I'm also the  
15 President of Mobilizing Preachers and Communities,  
16 known as MPAC, which is a nonprofit, civil rights,  
17 and faith-based organization with membership of over  
18 300 churches throughout the New York and Tri State  
19 area. I co-founded MPAC because I felt that the  
20 church needed to take a more active role in the life  
21 of the community to ensure justice and equality for  
22 all people. It is these concerns that bring me here  
23 today. I find it troubling that activists and  
24 leaders such as yourselves would try to take away our  
25 right here in New York City to choose what we can and

2 cannot buy. All citizens here in our diverse urban  
3 city are largely populated by minorities are being  
4 stripped of their right to purchase what they choose.  
5 People have a right to choose not to wear fur, but  
6 for opponents to not have the right to determine how  
7 we reward our hard work. Americans believe in  
8 freedom, choice, and prosperity. We believe that  
9 with hard work and opportunity, you will be rewarded.  
10 For our community that has struggled for centuries to  
11 achieve equality and freedom in this country, to  
12 being out told what we can and cannot purchase is an  
13 insult. Everyone is entitled to their own personal  
14 beliefs whether it be cultural, religious, or custom.  
15 But opponents to refer are not entitled to encroach  
16 on the rights of others who disagree. Opponents of  
17 furred do not understand the importance in the black  
18 community. They do not understand that we have a  
19 long history of wearing furs passed down through our  
20 families for generations. They do not understand the  
21 role of fur as a symbol of achievement in society for  
22 a disadvantaged group. Our ability to wear fur  
23 historically has been assigned that we find only be,  
24 part of New York society, something we were prevented  
25 from being a part of for hundreds of years. A ban on

2 for is a ban on black culture. For us, this is a  
3 pattern throughout history of Blacks being told what  
4 rights they can and cannot have by the white  
5 majority. We cannot and will not stand for this  
6 injustice and this discrimination. A firm ban would  
7 not only negatively impact black community, it would  
8 have devastating economic impacts for the historic  
9 for industry in the city's entire fashion economy.  
10 This will destroy one of the last small business-run  
11 industry in our city. Shouldn't we be protecting  
12 these works who rely on the industry to make money to  
13 feed their family? Shouldn't we be preserving small  
14 businesses instead of destroying them? I will wrap  
15 it up. New York City will lose 7500 jobs and 150  
16 businesses will be forced to shut down with the ban  
17 of the sale of fur. These are small family  
18 businesses that are being forced to shatter their  
19 storefronts that have been around for generations  
20 without fair say. A firm ban would be another way  
21 to rapidly gentrify taking jobs away from first and  
22 second generation Americans whose parents and  
23 grandparents came to this country and worked hard to  
24 provide for their families.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

1 a n

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you,

3 Reverend. I have to wrap up. Thank you.

4 [Applause]

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Folks, no round--

6 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Again--

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: of applause. You've  
8 been warned multiple times.

9 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: All right. Thank  
10 you. Thank you all for your testimony.

11 [Background comments]

12 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: John Bartep.

13 LEGAL COUNSEL: Bartlett.

14 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Bartlett. Andrew  
15 Kaplan, Gia Poli, Ashley Burn. One more. Desmond  
16 Catagan.

17 JOHN BARTLETT: To the esteemed city  
18 Council members, my name is John Bartlett and I live  
19 in Chelsea and Council member Corey Johnson's  
20 district and I urged him to support this bill. I'm  
21 here to speak for those who have no voice, the  
22 animals. I'm a fashion designer here in New York  
23 City, a member of the prestigious CFDA, Council of  
24 Fashion Designers of America, and have had my own  
25 clothing labels since 1992. In the winter of two

2 awards from the CFDA, best newcomer and menswear  
3 designer of the year, and was also the recipient of  
4 the designer of the year from the American Apparel  
5 and Footwear Association. My work has been shown on  
6 runways across the globe and I have sold my  
7 collections and higher-end department stores like  
8 Bergdorf Goodman, Barney's, and Saks Fifth Avenue.  
9 For my fall 2000 collection, I reluctantly used fur  
10 due to the ongoing pressure from retailers and  
11 magazine editors who wanted a more, quote unquote,  
12 luxurious product. After many years of being out of  
13 fashion, the industry was seeing a resurgence in fur  
14 and I decided to jump on the bandwagon and use it. I  
15 didn't feel comfortable, to be honest, and  
16 immediately after I showed my collection in fashion  
17 week, I received a video from fellow designer, Stella  
18 McCartney, revealing the underbelly and violent  
19 reality of the fur industry. I have never used fur  
20 since then and have realized how heartless, inhumane,  
21 and archaic the fur industry is. While smaller  
22 animals are gassed to kill them only further for, larger  
23 animals like foxes are anally and vaginally  
24 electrocuted and this is something the public does  
25 not realize. Steel traps are used for coyotes in the

2 wild, another cruel practice. And many customers  
3 don't even realize that they are buying a fur trimmed  
4 or fur garment. It is time for New York to embrace a  
5 more humane economy, one that reflects the values of  
6 the majority of its inhabitants. Our culture and  
7 society are evolving in so many ways and banning the  
8 sale of fur, and outdated and inherently violent and  
9 cruel product, would reinforce New York's stature as  
10 the fashion capital of the world and create new  
11 opportunities for the fashion industry to evolve  
12 along with its customer. There is talk that using  
13 furs more environmentally efficient and green than  
14 faux fur, but there is no relevance in this either or  
15 argument. For one, raising the animal for its furs  
16 not environmentally sound and causes a good degree of  
17 waste and suffering and many of the new photo furs  
18 being developed are environmentally friendly as the  
19 demand for them grows. Irregardless, the issue is  
20 not real for versus faux, and anyone using that as an  
21 argument to justify suffering is grasping at straws.  
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: You may-- You may  
24 continue.

2           ANDREW KAPLAN:     You ready?  Hi.  My name  
3 is Andrew Kaplan.  I'm a veterinarian in Manhattan  
4 district 6.  Gandhi says the greatness of a nation  
5 and its moral progress can be judged by the way its  
6 animals are treated.  As a vet I can tell you I have  
7 first-hand experience with how animals can suffer.  I  
8 can tell you about the mental breakdown that occurs  
9 when animals are crowded in unnatural confined spaces  
10 for prolonged periods of time.  I can tell you about  
11 how traumatic and cruel it is to die by  
12 electrocution, drowning, gassing, and direct trauma.  
13 I can tell you about the unfathomable act of scanning  
14 another living being alive.  I own a veterinary  
15 hospital in the upper west side.  Having had enough  
16 of seeing my clients bringing their dogs into my  
17 hospital wearing fur coats and confronting them about  
18 it, I finally placed graphic signs in the window of  
19 my office showing, alongside the code that they would  
20 soon be turned into, animals with their legs crushed  
21 in steel whole leg whole traps awaiting a bludgeoning  
22 death by their captors.  This, in order to educate  
23 the community in hopes of preventing them from buying  
24 these coats.  Having seen one of my signs, one of my  
25 clients, who might be here today, her name is Andy

2 Golden, owner of Golden Styles, a fur company in  
3 Manhattan, felt compelled to reveal who she was.

4 Incredulous, I asked her what she felt was the  
5 difference between her dogs that she loves and the  
6 furbearing animals that her company tortures in her  
7 business. To that, she had no answer. I then asked  
8 her how she would feel if dogs became the object of  
9 the fur industry in the United States and if her dogs  
10 were taken from her to be killed. Again, she had no  
11 answer. I last asked her if she had ever visited the  
12 fur farms of her business and experience the torture  
13 for herself. She says, I could not do that. I asked  
14 why and her answer, because it would be too  
15 disturbing. I suspect any human being with feelings,  
16 i.e. all of us, given an opportunity to witness in  
17 person what we would do today's animals on fur farms  
18 and in order to capture them in the wild would find  
19 it at least disturbing and, at worst, downright  
20 disgraceful, shameful, unspeakable, contemptible,  
21 and-- at worst. And if you don't, you would  
22 certainly be in the minority. The majority find this  
23 practice reprehensible and therefore, it must end.

24 We must allow our conscious to guide us. I've  
25 listened to the prior testimony and I want to make

2 some emphasis on the fact that these animals are  
3 being tortured and killed for fashion only. This is  
4 not necessary and just because we can doesn't mean we  
5 should. And finally, animals are not trapped for  
6 conservation. They are trapped for money. The  
7 trappers don't wake up every morning saying, I'm  
8 going to go work on conservation. They do it because  
9 they want to make money.

10 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

11 ASHLEY BURN: Good afternoon. I'm Ashley  
12 burn and I am an associate director with PETA and a  
13 longtime resident of New York City. Over the past  
14 decade through my work with PETA, I've had a front  
15 row seat as consumers have rejected fur as designers  
16 and retailers have responded to the demand for  
17 clothing that is at the: eco-friendly. I've also  
18 been on the front lines of the grassroots movement to  
19 educate the public about fur here in New York City  
20 and I can tell you first hand that so many people now  
21 who are purchasing for are doing so without knowing  
22 that it is real. I can't tell you how many people,  
23 when approached on the street and told that their fur  
24 collar or their, you know, for keychain is real will  
25 break down crying, they will be disgusted. I've seen

2 people take off their trims, throw them away. People  
3 are so upset. So many people just assume that  
4 something like that which is not even be real fur.  
5 So, that's one reason why we see this as a consumer  
6 protection issue. We know that most consumers do not  
7 want real fur. Designers and business owners to  
8 continue to use abused animals and their collection  
9 are a dying breed and the future of the fur industry  
10 lies in innovations like faux fur made from mota  
11 (sic) acrylics or hemp that don't harm the planet or  
12 the animals who live on it. In many designers,  
13 retailers, and brands formally in the business of  
14 selling for have found that they can do quite well  
15 without it. For example, this past winter, a  
16 designer named Kim Cantor, who was the former  
17 creative director of Jay Mendel, launched a line of  
18 sustainable faux fur outerwear called House of Fluff.  
19 She used the skills that she had initially developed  
20 in the notorious fur atillier (sic) to create her  
21 collection, citing a desire to produce fashionable,  
22 luxurious products without the untenable cruelty to  
23 animals and extreme environmental damage that she  
24 could no longer ignore in the fur industry. The  
25 collection debuted at Saks Fifth Avenue and, in just

2 a handful of months, it is received accolades and  
3 attention across fashion press and business press,  
4 all saying the same thing. That an ethical approach  
5 to fashion is good to business. There is no reason  
6 why others cannot and should not follow suit. With  
7 so many options that are warm, beautiful, eco-  
8 friendly and cruelty free, there is no excuse to  
9 clean the something is outmoded and cruel as real  
10 fur. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Hit the  
12 red button on the microphone. And remember to say  
13 your name before you give your testimony.

14 GIA POLI: Hi, everyone. Good  
15 afternoon. My name is Gia and I am eight years old.  
16 I am here today because I am in support of Intro  
17 1476. I think that it is cruel to keep animals in  
18 filthy cages, electrocute them, and sometimes even  
19 skin them alive all because they were born with a fur  
20 coat.

21 [Background comments]

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Keep it down, please.

23 GIA POLI: As you can see, there are  
24 many people here today that want to ban the sale of  
25 fur because animals are in pain, they are dying,

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

100

2 scared, and being killed. That's why we want you to  
3 support the animals, join us, and to make a  
4 difference. Thank you.

5           DESMOND CATAGAN: Hello, honorable Council  
6 members. My name is Desmond Catagan from Harlem. I  
7 have been a PETA volunteer since the 90's and I have  
8 participated in many anti-fur protests here in New  
9 York. As a gay black man, I am also a long-time  
10 advocate for both gay and civil rights. I was  
11 surprised when I heard that a preacher planned to  
12 protest this bill because some black people like to  
13 wear fur coats to church. This bill doesn't preclude  
14 anyone from wearing fur. Also, I follow Black Live  
15 Matter and the NAACP and I have never see the right  
16 to buy new fur coats in any civil rights agenda. I  
17 saw the flyer that Reverend Green posted urging his  
18 followers to get on a bus to city hall for what he  
19 called a free field trip, a free lunch, and a chance  
20 to win a 250 dollar American Express gift card with  
21 no mention whatsoever of the fur issue. As someone  
22 who volunteers for causes free of charge, I came to  
23 city hall that day to meet this group and ask  
24 questions. I have the utmost respect for views other  
25 than my own and look forward to having an exchange of

2 ideas, but the group was stage managed and neither I  
3 nor a reporter were allowed to talk to anyone other  
4 than the appointed spokesperson. When the group got  
5 off the busses, they were handed homemade protest  
6 signs by white pro-fur lobbyists. Whether money  
7 changed hands to stage this stunt, God only knows.  
8 There are so many serious civil rights issues that  
9 it's demeaning for an African American community to  
10 be used as smoke screen for the predominantly white  
11 fur trade. The fur trade attempted to inject the  
12 race issue last month at a hearing for the bill to  
13 ban furs-- ban fur sales in California. Christ  
14 Holden, an African American assembly member from  
15 Pasadena said that he found such attempts insulting.  
16 In pledging his support for the bill, to suggest that  
17 there's a cultural connection to this issue  
18 trivializes the point and it focuses on a divisive  
19 issue that is not accepted by me and it doesn't sell  
20 with any African Americans I know. I just want to  
21 say-- Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you, sir. I  
23 appreciate it. Thank you all for testifying. I'm  
24 going to call up the next panel and I'm going to be

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING  
200

2 strict on the clock for many reasons, but mostly  
3 because we have 150 people who are left to testify.

4 [Background comments]

5 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: 150 people at two  
6 minutes is about five hours. It's--

7 [Background comments]

8 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: It's going to be  
9 about 5 o'clock in a few minutes, so just keep that  
10 in mind. I am not trying to be rude. I'm just  
11 trying to be respectful of everyone's time. Up next  
12 we have Honorable Thomas Cohen, Stephen Conit, Nadeem  
13 Walt-- Walter or Waltell. Lenny Khan. Lou Russi.

14 [Background comments]

15 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Those who have  
16 testimony can actually submit their testimony for the  
17 record and it will be treated as if you spoke on the  
18 panel, for those who have to leave. You may begin.

19 THOMAS COHEN: Hello, Mr. Chairman.  
20 I'm sorry that the other members of the committee are  
21 not here. It would've been nice to address them, as  
22 well. My name is Thomas Cohen. I am a four term  
23 elected trustee and police Commissioner for Long  
24 Island. I am also the president of the Cheston (sp?)  
25 Foundation of the Fur Industry of New York, an 80-

2 year-old 501(c) (3) charitable organization that has  
3 been providing financial support to elderly and  
4 infirm for workers. I am a first generation American  
5 and a third-generation for a year. I have been  
6 employed in the fur industry in the city of New York  
7 for 36 years and I can assure you that I am totally  
8 familiar with the sale in the use of fur and related  
9 products and I also understand the passion behind  
10 this proposal, but I also know that it is a mistake.  
11 This proposal is an overreach on the part of  
12 government. The marketplace should determine what  
13 industries survive and which industries die.  
14 Dinosaurs were not legislated out of existence.  
15 Crime hasn't disappeared in New York because of  
16 restricted handgun laws being enacted. As officials,  
17 you should know that you cannot legislate conduct or  
18 impose your personal beliefs upon the residents of  
19 the city of New York. This proposal is about one  
20 thing and one thing only and that is intolerance.  
21 It's intolerance on the behalf of the group of  
22 individuals who are opposed to the livelihood in the  
23 industry and then I probably support. I am old  
24 enough to remember when paper bags were blamed for  
25 the destruction of millions of trees and politicians

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

202

2 determined that plastic bags were of the solution. A  
3 ban on the sale of fur garments and related  
4 accessories will not achieve any of your intended  
5 goals. Determined fur buyers will take the Long  
6 Island Railroad to Nassau County, Metro North to  
7 Westchester, New Jersey transit to New Jersey. Your  
8 actions only force the closure of small companies in  
9 the loss of jobs and, simultaneously, decreased tax  
10 revenues in the city that it so badly needs. I ask  
11 you to look at the portrait of George Washington  
12 that's over there and on the ceiling above everyone's  
13 had there is a comment. It's a quote and it says our  
14 commercial policy should hold an equal and  
15 impassioned hand. George Washington. This bill is  
16 not compassionate. Thank you, sir.

17 STEVE COWIT: My name is Steve Cowit. I am  
18 the co-owner of Henry Cowit Incorporated and Madison  
19 Avenue Furs. Our address is 118 West 27th Street in  
20 District 3. My brother and third generation  
21 furriers. I have been in the firm business for 42  
22 years. Our business dates back over 80 use. Our  
23 business employs five full-time workers besides my  
24 brother and myself. If you pass this for ban, these  
25 workers will lose their jobs and we will have to shut

2 our doors. All of us are over 50 to 60 years old and  
3 a tough age to be looking for new types of jobs as we  
4 have been involved in the fur industry for the  
5 majority of our lives. The band is almost criminal  
6 in nature as the speaker the Council and his backers  
7 will be closing thriving multi-generation family  
8 businesses. They will be putting thousands of  
9 workers on the unemployment line. They will use  
10 millions of dollars of tax revenue for the city.  
11 They will add many more empty storefronts to the  
12 already saturated city. This band will take away  
13 constituents freedom of choice. Over the last few,  
14 we've heard from hundreds of our customers asking the  
15 very question: how dare they take away our choice of  
16 fur. How dare they take away our choice of freedom.  
17 They are also asking the question: what comes next?  
18 Leather, goose down, silk, wool. Peter's got wool  
19 campaigns against wool. Where will it end? Speaker  
20 Johnson refused to speak to our industry, nor has he  
21 visited our stores and businesses. He was invited.  
22 He, however, has spoken to a representative of PETA.  
23 Their agenda and goal is the total elimination of all  
24 animal use. They are against animals used for  
25 medical research that find cures for life-threatening

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

201

2 diseases. They are also a tax exempt organization  
3 who wants to put my tax paying business out of  
4 business. We ask the Council and especially this  
5 committee. Do your research and not base your  
6 decision on strictly emotion. We all believe in  
7 humane treatment of animals, but how about human  
8 treatment of humans?

9 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you, sir.

10 NADIN WAHEED: Hi. My name is Nadin  
11 Waheed and I'm the owner of Daniel's Leather. I had  
12 a written speech, but I ripped it apart 20 minutes  
13 ago after hearing so many lies from the other side.  
14 Just to give one example, one lady over here said  
15 that fox pelt costs 10 dollars. If it would cost 10  
16 dollars, I'd be a millionaire right now. It costs  
17 about 125 dollars. So there were a lot of things  
18 that were being said that are not true at all. I  
19 thought that I was listening to Donald Trump.  
20 There--

21 [Laughter]

22 NADIN WAHEED: There are about 7000  
23 jobs and I'm surprised that the one theme that is  
24 constant that I see: they talk about animals. I am an  
25 animal lover. If you go on my hands to Graham

2 paints, the 20 pictures of my dog. What about the

3 humans? Not one of these people mention anything

4 about the people that will be suffering from this.

5 Families-- so if it 7000 jobs and each one with a

6 family of four or five, imagine how many people we

7 are talking about. Another lie I heard was that

8 these people can be trained to do something else.

9 That is not true. I am-- To give you an example,

10 there is a Russian couple that I worked with, 70 year

11 old. All their lives they have made me cats. That

12 is the only thing they know. They've made a

13 dignified living and now they are going to be told to

14 do something else. That makes no sense. The third

15 thing is that I think that it is a slippery slope.

16 Today they are starting with this thing. I have

17 dealt with these people. They are protested in front

18 of my store. To them, even a service dog for the

19 blind they think it's animal cruelty. So where do

20 they draw the line? So you should ask them. Nobody

21 asked them this one question. How do you feel about

22 lamb or cow or add or chicken? Then you will have

23 seen where they are really coming from. Thank you.

24 LUIS RESSI: Hello. Hey, my name is Luis

25 Ressi and worked with Mr. Waheed here for 20 years on

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

206

2 Orchard Street and I am pro-abortion just like a lot  
3 of everyone in here is, as well. Just time to get  
4 that out. Yeah. The-- And to be honest, save the  
5 company I work for, I just don't see the  
6 representation of the consumer because were talking a  
7 lot about ethics and morals, but this is a consumer  
8 affairs committee. I don't see the representation  
9 like, as I said. If you were to look up a small  
10 company, we have been around since 95. We have about  
11 160,000 followers on social media. On Minster  
12 Graham. 95 percent of those followers are New  
13 Yorkers. That is your constituency. Those are the  
14 people who are buying from us. Who are following us.  
15 Those are the people who vote you into your seat and  
16 I think any vote for this fur ban is a vote against  
17 your consistency. Thank you.

18 LEONARD KHAN: My name is Leonard Kahn.  
19 I'm the last of 14 related Khans who are in the firm  
20 business. I am 91 and I joined my father's business  
21 after graduating from Penn State in 1947 and, except  
22 for Army service during the Korean War years of 51 to  
23 53, I stayed in the same industry. During these  
24 years, I came to appreciate the difficult hands-on  
25 technical work that went into the making and

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

207

2 marketing of our product. All involved, employee and  
3 employer were like family. We depended on each  
4 other. I was able to put two sons through medical  
5 school and my daughter through college, after which  
6 she became a teacher. I appreciate my clients, many  
7 third-generation who are so loyal and enjoy the  
8 warmth and beauty of fur garments. God gave humans  
9 the right to choose one is right for them. This  
10 bill, if passed, will take away that right and, in so  
11 doing, will deprive many hard-working people of the  
12 ability to make a better life for their families.  
13 And that is inhuman.

14 LUIS RESSI: That's right.

15 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Thank  
16 you all.

17 STEVE COWIT: Do we give this to you?

18 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Yeah. Shit. All  
19 right. Just, again, for the record, if anybody has  
20 any testimony they want to submit, they can leave it  
21 at the front desk here with the Sgt. at arms and will  
22 be treated as if you testified up on the desk. Thank  
23 you.

24 LEGAL COUNSEL: So we're picking from  
25 my--

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING  
208

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Yes. Next we have  
3 Michelle Cuberro, Angelina Poli, LeAnne Hilgart, and  
4 Sharon Descorfano.

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: Let's see if they come.

6 [Background comments]

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet down, please,  
8 everybody.

9 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. You may  
10 begin.

11 [Background comments]

12 ANGELINA POLI: Good afternoon. My name  
13 is Angelina and I am alive in the years old. I am  
14 from Staten Island. I am here because I would like  
15 to grow up in a world where we don't torture  
16 beautiful, sentient being stressed to wear for.  
17 Wearing animal skin is cruel, outdated, and involves  
18 pain and suffering you wouldn't wish on your worst  
19 enemy. They animals to not deserve this kind of  
20 treatment. Whether they are shot in the head, anally  
21 electrocuted, trapped in wire cages, or skinned  
22 alive, it is extremely unnecessary and wrong. Brands  
23 such as Gucci, Michael cores, and coach has gone for  
24 free along with many more and if they can, so can  
25 you. Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

209

2 [Applause]

3 LEANNE HILGART: Hi. My name is Leanne  
4 Mailey Hilgart. I live in District 34. I just want  
5 to say thank you to our Council member, Antonio  
6 Reynoso for cosponsoring this spell to ban the sale  
7 of fur in New York City. This is a very special day  
8 to me. When I was six years old, a girl down the  
9 street got a rabbit fur coat for Christmas. I didn't  
10 know anything about a nonelectric use and, for farms,  
11 or that it took 40 lives to make that coat, but I was  
12 friends with the rabbits in my neighborhood and I  
13 knew that many like them had lost their lives for  
14 this coat. It was hard for me to understand how and,  
15 at 10, I used my social studies fair report to  
16 research for farming. What I found was so awful that  
17 I knew I needed to dedicate my life to saving animals  
18 from industrial cruelty. So 10 years ago I started  
19 Vote, a pioneer vegan fashion brand to make winter  
20 coats warm enough for Chicago winter without the use  
21 of any animals, also sewn in New York City. I filled  
22 our Co. with high tech textiles like primaloft (sp?)  
23 eco that keep astronauts and Arctic explorers warm so  
24 that there is no reason for innocent animals to lose  
25 their lives for fashion. There have been so many

2 amazing cruelty free winter coat companies that have  
3 followed since then. Was still many people have no  
4 idea how a fur coat is made or how many lives are  
5 lost so tragically, as people have become educated,  
6 the demand for ethical fashion has begun to grow  
7 intensely. 50 percent of Americans prefer  
8 responsible brands and two thirds of millennials do  
9 and it is growing. Plus, a recent study shows that  
10 9.3 million vegan fashion hits, social impressions  
11 were made over 12 month period. I understand there  
12 is concern for the workers who currently make for as  
13 a living. Fortunately, as fur making declines, this  
14 new type of luxury fashion, ethical fashion,  
15 prioritizes local and living wage production. So  
16 ethical fashion doesn't just include making things  
17 cruelty free or good for the environment, but often  
18 prioritizes making apparel locally. Supporting the  
19 city's garment district and artisans with living wage  
20 jobs, as my label has for several years. When I was  
21 18, I participated in my first fur-free Friday and it  
22 is so exciting to be here today. The world is ready  
23 for the new era in fashion where we are creating good  
24 through our industrial system. Using business to  
25 make the world a better place, not murdering 40

2 animals per coat. As a leader in the world, it's  
3 time for New York City to ban the sale of fur and  
4 begin the end of this barbaric, outdated industry to  
5 usher in a new era of ethical standards and fashion.

6 SHARON DESCARFANO: Good afternoon. My  
7 name is Sharon Descarfano. I am a New York City  
8 resident, member of the New York State bar and a  
9 member of the New York City Bar Association's  
10 Committee on Animal Law. I am here testifying in a  
11 personal capacity in support of Intro 1476  
12 prohibiting the sale of further apparel. As an  
13 animal protection attorney and advocate, I am  
14 numerous times shared my story of a naïve 16-year-old  
15 Sharon on a school trip to the Soviet Union when I  
16 purchased a fur hat as a souvenir. I share this  
17 story to underscore how each of us can and must  
18 change our consumer behavior as our own understanding  
19 of all's. I no longer purchase or wear fur because I  
20 now know what I didn't know then. How millions of  
21 animals are bred to die on fur farms every year, as  
22 we've heard today how they are confined to tiny wire  
23 cages for their entire lives, how undercover  
24 investigations have documented their effort cruelty,  
25 including animals being skinned alive. With that

2 individual knowledge comes the responsibility to make  
3 more humane choices. And when that individual  
4 knowledge becomes common knowledge, our laws need to  
5 reflect and enforce the collective belief,  
6 cornerstone of any civilized society, cruelty simply  
7 is wrong. Opposition today has been focusing on the  
8 impact this band will have on businesses. I  
9 appreciate that, as the hub of the fashion industry,  
10 New York will be especially cautious about a band  
11 similar to ones approved in Los Angeles and San  
12 Francisco. However, leading design houses, as we  
13 have heard today, including designers such as Gucci,  
14 Versace, Burberry, Michael Kors, and coach already  
15 have renounced the use of fur. Publications such as  
16 in style and London fashion week have banished for  
17 from their pages. As always, continued success for  
18 businesses will depend largely on their ability to  
19 adapt to the changing needs of customers rather than  
20 clinging to outdated trends.

21 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

22 SHARON DESCARFANO: I want to point  
23 out, just also given just a little extra time, as a  
24 member of the New York State bar, the exemptions  
25 included in this proposed legislation to make a fair

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

213

2 and balanced approach to addressing animal welfare  
3 concerns while being respectful of religious customs  
4 and practical in terms of already existing for  
5 apparel and, furthermore, the penalties for the  
6 violations are necessarily proportionate to the  
7 considerable price tag of for apparel. Dollar  
8 amounts need to be high enough to deter those--

9 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: [interposing]

10 Thank you.

11 SHARON DESCARFANO: who might otherwise  
12 deem the risk of penalty.

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: You can submit it.  
14 We will definitely take a look at it.

15 SHARON DESCARFANO: Okay.

16 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you so much.

17 SHARON DESCARFANO: Thank you so much.

18 [Background comments]

19 MICHELLE CUBRERRO: Hello. I'm  
20 Michelle Cubrerro. I'm from Queens. Middle Village.  
21 And I am deaf and there is no-- I have some  
22 questions for everybody. I'm just wondering if I had  
23 my own business, I'm wondering how you would feel if  
24 I sold your skin? What if I ripped your skin from  
25 your body? What if you were left for dead in a trap?

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

214

2 How would you feel if I stole your babies and sold  
3 them? How would-- How would you feel if your hair  
4 was ripped out of your head? How would you feel if  
5 you had to chew off your own hand for survival to  
6 escape that trap? That is the reality of the fox and  
7 the chinchilla and the mink. And if you support the  
8 fur industry, that means the blood is on your hands.  
9 And just imagine being trapped for a long time in a  
10 small teeny tiny cage. Your body is aching. You  
11 can't move. Can you imagine this? So that's all I  
12 really wanted to share. Thank you for listening to  
13 me.

14 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Thank  
15 you. Thank you all.

16 LEGAL COUNSEL: There is some on here.  
17 So--

18 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I want to call up  
19 the next panel. Yeah.

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: There is some included  
21 in this.

22 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Fredrick Gelb,  
23 Michael O'Brien, Jacob Robridge, Alexandros Palitas.  
24 Fredrick Gelb, Michael O'Brien, Jacob Robridge,  
25 Alexandros Palitas.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

215

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: If the name was called,  
3 please come up.

4 [Background comments]

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yep. How many did you  
6 need?

7 *As many as you can afford to give me.*

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: 10?

9 Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Norma McDonald,  
11 Nicholas Secas, Vincent Serechi, Ariel Colis.

12 [Background comments]

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: You may begin.

14 Is that fun? Okay. So, God afternoon.

15 My name is Alex--

16 Oops.

17 ALEXANDROS PALATITAS: My name is  
18 Alexandros Palatitas and I'm a 17-year-old high  
19 school senior and an incoming freshman as an honor  
20 student at Baruch College right here in New York  
21 City. Now, the proposed firm band has played a huge  
22 role in my college decision. Although I am beyond  
23 grateful to have received the full scholarship  
24 through Baruch, I was forced to leave many more  
25 enticing opportunities on the table due to the

2 financial restriction it would apply on my family if  
3 this for band would have passed. Now the reason I  
4 share that story today is because, between all this  
5 debate of whether for should be used in fashion or  
6 not, I feel a very important group of people seem to  
7 be forgotten in this equation. Those people are the  
8 sons and daughters of those that would be affected if  
9 it is the van of fur were to occur. In other words,  
10 we have truly failed to ponder how we are affecting  
11 the next generation of hard-working Americans. For  
12 example, I aspire to become a lawyer and my brother  
13 recently became a certified teacher for the  
14 Department of Education. Both of us were able to  
15 pursue our dreams and conquer lifelong goals thanks  
16 to our parent's hard work, dedication, and success in  
17 the fur industry. So as I stand before you today,  
18 and not only fight for the hard-working men and women  
19 in the fur industry, I fight for those who are merely  
20 too young to fight for themselves. I fight for the  
21 dreams of every son and daughter that simply has no  
22 control what their parents do to make ends meet.  
23 Today, as I stand up here, I fight for future  
24 doctors, our future lawyers, our future teachers, and  
25 our future engineers. Now, for those who are looking

2 at me and don't get the full picture, I would like to  
3 ask a simple favor. I'd like every mother and father  
4 to go home today and asked the kids with their dreams  
5 are and take special notes of how their faces will  
6 light up talking about that dream. Now tell them  
7 their dreams are nearly unattainable thanks to you  
8 not being able to provide for them and, once again,  
9 their facial expressions will tell you the full  
10 story. But this time their faces will be filled with  
11 fright and English. That's a conversation no parent  
12 and no child should ever have to experience,  
13 especially in the greatest city of New York City. So  
14 in the shortest of terms, the proposed for band is  
15 robbing our youth of opportunities and crashing their  
16 dreams in the process. Now that's what I call  
17 inhumane.

18 [Applause]

19 NORMA MCDONALD: Good afternoon. My name  
20 is Norma McDonald. I'm the North American Sales  
21 Manager for OWS since 2009. OWS is a globally  
22 accredited totally independent laboratory with 31  
23 years of experience testing more than 10,000 samples  
24 for determination of physical and biological  
25 degradation in a wide variety of environments

2 including marine waters. In May 2018, OWS concluded  
3 30 days of degradation testing of four natural furs  
4 and one faux fur in accordance with test methods ISO  
5 985 and ASTM D 5511. These methods have been proven  
6 to simulate and accelerate the anaerobic, meaning  
7 without oxygen, biodegradation process that occurs  
8 spontaneously in a landfill over decades. The test  
9 prescribes placing the samples into an inoculum  
10 coming from a commercial facility, treating solid  
11 ways that would otherwise go to a landfill. The test  
12 measures biodegradation on the basis of biogas that  
13 is produced by the microbial activity. These tests  
14 were performed in duplicate and included a blank and  
15 positive control and all requirements for a valid  
16 test were fulfilled. The biodegradation of each of  
17 the natural furs started immediately and then reached  
18 a plateau during the 30 days of testing showing  
19 partial degradation. The rate and extent of  
20 biodegradation under anaerobic conditions was similar  
21 to other natural materials. For instance, newspaper,  
22 we straw, and oak leaves. Many natural materials  
23 require fungi to completely biodegrade, which are not  
24 present in an anaerobic environment. Biodegradation  
25 of those so far never started. At the end of the

2 test of biodegradation percentage of 0.3 was  
3 measured. The slight positive result is attributed  
4 to natural variations in the biogas production of the  
5 inoculum. Therefore, it is concluded that the sulfur  
6 is not biodegradable under these conditions. In  
7 addition, testing showed that the natural first  
8 samples readily disintegrated within 30 days. The  
9 skin fell apart and disappeared, but the hairs still  
10 remained since proteins and hair are more resistant  
11 to decay. Additional research is recommended to test  
12 biodegradability under anaerobic condition where  
13 oxygen and fungi are present to complete a comparison  
14 between natural and faux fur.

15 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I apologize. Go  
16 ahead, sir.

17 ARIEL COLLIS: Council members, my name  
18 is Ariel Collis. I am an economist with Capital  
19 Trade Inc., an economic consulting firm based in  
20 Washington DC. I was commissioned by the  
21 International Fur Federations of the Americas to  
22 estimate the impact in New York City on the proposed  
23 ban of the sale of fur products in the city. The  
24 results of my research are summarized in a report, a  
25 summary of which has been sent to all councilmembers,

2 but the report can be made available to any Council  
3 member that requests at. My research found that is  
4 the proposed city ban were enacted, and the first  
5 year of the ban, the city would lose up to 850  
6 million dollars in revenues from businesses that sell  
7 for products and businesses that earn revenues from  
8 first sellers. The city would lose up to 76 million  
9 dollars in sales taxes on the user revenues. It's  
10 estimated that up to 7500 men and women would lose  
11 their jobs in the city in the first year of this ban.  
12 However, the ban would remain in effect, not for one  
13 year, but for the first seeable future. Over the  
14 first 10 years of this proposed ban, the city would  
15 lose up to 7 billion dollars. My estimation of  
16 losses come from first-hand interviews and surveys  
17 submitted by businesses that sell for throughout the  
18 city, as well as financial disclosure firms from  
19 firms that sell fur. My research shows that business  
20 is affected by the ban include 150 retailers,  
21 wholesalers, manufacturers, and service providers who  
22 earn the majority of their revenues from fur. If the  
23 proposed city ban were enacted, and it's anticipated  
24 that nearly all of these fur businesses would move  
25 their operations from New York or close down their

2 business entirely. This assumption is based directly  
3 on responses from survey participants. 97 percent of  
4 respondents representing 99.8 percent of the revenues  
5 among the respondents stated that they would close  
6 their store or move operations from New York City and  
7 the proposed city ban were enacted. These are  
8 largely family-owned and operated business is that  
9 would be closing down and relocating. Based on my  
10 research, most of these businesses were second or  
11 third generation family operated businesses that have  
12 done business in New York City for an average of 47  
13 years. I'd like to thank the committee for the  
14 opportunity to testify today. More of my testimony  
15 is available for your review.

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

17 ARIEL COLLIS: Thank you.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Could you please share  
19 how you conducted your analysis, all that information  
20 for us with your testimony? If you could include it  
21 for us so we could take a look at the tax revenue,  
22 the survey, all of that be helpful for us.

23 ARIEL COLLIS: Certainly. The report  
24 will be included and submitted to the Commi-- To the  
25 panel.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

???

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

3 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Dear members of the New  
4 York City Council, my name is Nicholas Seekas and the  
5 proud owner of a small fur business here in New York  
6 City. I councilmembers Justin Brennan. It is here--  
7 It is with great sadness that I stand before you  
8 today. Sadness because I am starting to feel that my  
9 own city that I live and work in, the best city in  
10 the world, is becoming unrecognizable. When extreme  
11 and radical ideologies help influence policy and  
12 ultimately our culture and way of life. You see, it  
13 was exactly my age now, 55, that my immigrant father,  
14 the founder of his own fur manufacturing company was  
15 facing his own crisis. At the time, I was employed  
16 in the aerospace industry working as a systems  
17 engineer. As the eldest of three siblings who were  
18 still in high school and college, I quit to come back  
19 to the type of work I grew up doing part-time since  
20 the age of 13. I believe it was Speaker Corey  
21 Johnson who said that it was the right thing to do  
22 when asked why he introduced this bill. Well, is  
23 that the right thing for someone, anyone, to decide  
24 what a person should wear or eat? People have their  
25 own cultural beliefs, economic and personal reasons

2 to consume a product. There is no right or wrong.

3 Just an opinion formed based, hopefully, on sound

4 information. The fur industry is in the fashion

5 capital of the world. Loving and respecting the

6 animals is the cornerstone of our heritage, something

7 that the activists like to distort. We understand

8 that the only way to achieve the quality and pelts

9 brought to market requires the highest of animal

10 welfare standards. When to the mandate to create

11 jobs get replaced with the one that destroys jobs?

12 When did the belief that one could work hard to try

13 to achieve the American dream get replaced with

14 selective reasoning? When did the future of our

15 business depend on political headwinds and not the

16 marketplace and common sense? On the news last week,

17 it was said that about one garbage truck worth of

18 textiles is burned or placed in a landfill every

19 second. Every second. For is natural, sustainable,

20 biodegradable, environmentally friendly, and

21 recyclable. We are part of the circular economy. My

22 wife who now works with me also came from the garment

23 industry. Together, we strive to provide all that

24 our customers wish for in products and services. Our

25 retirements and livelihood completely relies on this

2 business, as well as the people who work for us. It  
3 would be devastating, as it would be nearly  
4 impossible to start completely over at this point in  
5 our lives. It is difficult enough to operate and  
6 maintain a small business here in New York City, but  
7 to now have this taken away with the stroke of a pen  
8 seems unconscionable. I would like to remind  
9 everyone that we enjoy living in a democratic and  
10 capitalist society that awards us certain  
11 personal freedoms and lets markets determine as a  
12 business is viable enough to continue. This  
13 governance role should be to adhere to these values  
14 and not take us down the wrong path of history. You  
15 have a duty to all citizens of this great city and  
16 nation to uphold these truths and not fall victim to  
17 extreme views that do not help brothers and sisters.  
18 I ask you, I implore you to oppose this legislation  
19 to ban for sales. Please do the right thing. Thank  
20 you for your time and God bless America.

21 VINCENT CERISI: Good afternoon,  
22 councilmembers. My name is Vincent Cerisi and I am  
23 the General Council of the Echo Design Group. On  
24 behalf of Echo Design, I thank you for the  
25 opportunity to testify in this hearing. Echo Design

2 is a family-owned and operated enterprise in  
3 operation since 1923. Today, Echo Design is one of  
4 the world's leading designers and manufactures of  
5 accessories and home products. We sell our product  
6 in both wholesale and retail capacities to department  
7 stores and specialty stores, as well as through  
8 consumers directly through catalogs and the internet.  
9 Echo Designs develops, produces, and distributes  
10 market-leading fashion accessories driven by print,  
11 pattern, color, and texture, including scarves,  
12 wraps, hats, gloves, home products, handbags,  
13 swimwear, engineer, beach, custom-designed products,  
14 and other fashion accessory items, utilizing the best  
15 fabrics and materials available. In addition to Echo  
16 branded product, we are long-standing licensee of a  
17 renowned American brand in the fashion accessories  
18 category and design and manufacture a product for  
19 many other prominent brands in the industry. We  
20 employ over 120 individuals in New York and New  
21 Jersey. Fur, shearling, and calf hair leather are  
22 routinely utilized by Echo Design as key components  
23 of the articles that we produce and sell under the  
24 Echo and other well-known brands. A ban of these  
25 materials would significantly impact our business and

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

226

2 that of our customers. As such, we respectfully  
3 request that the Council carefully weigh the  
4 ramifications of this legislation and its far-  
5 reaching effects on the lives of business owners,  
6 employees, and consumers who will be detrimentally  
7 impacted if this bill becomes law and effectively  
8 robbed them of their freedom to make a choice in a  
9 country that was founded upon freedom. Thank you.

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I want to thank you all.

11 I have a question from a gentleman who is here who  
12 spoke about his business so he runs with his family.  
13 I want to thank you for being here today. I  
14 apologize for the folks that testified when I was  
15 out. I was in a meeting that I couldn't miss, but I  
16 planned on coming back to hear from people who run  
17 these for businesses. So thank you for being here  
18 today. I wanted to ask you the skills set that is  
19 used by your family, your workers to be able to  
20 manufacture garments and sell garments, is that not a  
21 skill set that could be used for other products that  
22 are not fur-based products that are synthetic  
23 materials or other materials that do not involve the  
24 fur of the animals that we have talked about today?  
25 Are the skills so particular and specific that it

2 could be only be used on for and not any other type  
3 of garment or material that could still allow for the  
4 manufacturing of items that would still have a market  
5 in the marketplace that you just spoke about?

6 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Addressing--

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes. I was addressing  
8 you, sir. Thank you.

9 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Thank you. I believe  
10 the answer is that they are not transferable. Many  
11 of these, especially in the manufacturing part of  
12 making a garment, when you're actually working with  
13 fur itself, there are special machines.

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Uh-hm.

15 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: There are special  
16 methods from start to finish that take years to  
17 apprentice and learn and those are skills that really  
18 don't apply to anything else by using that specific  
19 machine to amend the pelts together to be able to  
20 match the pelts. And it takes years to understand  
21 and know how to do these things that these people  
22 who-- The force, the labor force, is trained in  
23 working specifically in that-- in their skill set to  
24 apply in very-- I don't know exactly to what they  
25 can put that. It's not rolling outlining or

2 anything. That's only a part of it. Right? That's  
3 the finishing part of the garment, if you're making a  
4 garment. Whether it's accessories or what have you.  
5 But the actual handling of the product is very  
6 unique.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: So, it sounds like we're  
8 not going to agree on one aspect, which is okay,  
9 which is-- to me, I do, of course you can tell from  
10 my opening statement and from the questions that I  
11 asked earlier in the earlier panels, to me this is a  
12 welfare issue, humane issue. An issue of wanting to  
13 ensure that animals are treated properly and not  
14 unnecessarily killed just for the purposes of wearing  
15 them for what many would consider to be a luxury  
16 product. And we may not agree on that. But what I'm  
17 trying to understand, is that ends up being the  
18 belief of the Council, not just of me, but of my  
19 colleagues, how do we do things to support family-  
20 owned legacy business is that is you, I think very  
21 articulately spoke about, part of the American dream,  
22 and wanting to be here and support a family and  
23 employ jobs. Societies and governments evolve all  
24 the time and things that we use to find we were okay  
25 with-- and I use an example or layer of we used to

2 think selling ivory was okay and then we decided that  
3 wasn't appropriate. What are things that we could do  
4 to support business says and small companies who we  
5 want to still have manufacturing jobs and still have  
6 retail businesses, what could we do to support the  
7 industry, maybe not in the exact way that it exists  
8 right now, but are there ideas that you have on what  
9 we could do to continue to support businesses that  
10 are trying to do this type of work, but would be  
11 potentially open to all evolving and getting support  
12 to do something not exactly the way it is now, but  
13 something along those lines.

14 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Again, directing that to  
15 me?

16 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes. To you, sir.

17 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Thank you. So, maybe  
18 I'm not the expert on the panel here to address that  
19 entirely, but I think earlier one of the programs,  
20 Fur Mark, I think addresses a lot of moves. If I  
21 may--

22 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Please.

23 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Do you agree that we  
24 should protect certain animals?

25 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

220

2 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Do you believe we might  
3 have the right to own pets?

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes. I own-- I have a  
5 pet.

6 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Do you believe that we  
7 might use animals for consumption? To eat?

8 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes.

9 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: So it's--

10 SPEAKER JOHNSON: But I believe there are  
11 limits.

12 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: I understand that. I--  
13 I also--

14 SPEAKER JOHNSON: [interposing] Not carte  
15 blanche. But yes. Go ahead. Sorry.

16 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: And also believe that,  
17 maybe, there's also animals that we should also try  
18 to avoid, right? These are animals that I'm scared  
19 of. And so, the ability-- the distinction and may  
20 be discrimination, if I may say, to prohibit wearing  
21 of animal skins when it's also part of what I  
22 mentioned, the circular economy, because we are  
23 using-- we're using the entire animal. We are not  
24 letting it go, you know, to waste as the makeup  
25 industry, eyelashes, compost, fertilizer, pet food--

2 These animals have to be treated right for our  
3 industry because the quality of the pelt is dependent  
4 on it. So, yes. There's many things, absolutely.  
5 Everything that I think was touched upon tonight,  
6 today, from coming up with better methods--

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: I hear what you're  
8 saying, but my-- I guess the difficult thing for me  
9 to bridge, and I had the conversation-- I know he's  
10 still here in the back with Mr. Oten-- is this would  
11 be a self-regulated system that is set up and I think  
12 given the-- again, we may not agree on the exact  
13 language you would use to describe it, but given the,  
14 what I considered to be very upsetting footage and  
15 evidence I have seen in the past-- I mean, some  
16 folks want to say it's all propaganda and it's all  
17 made up. I don't believe that it is all propaganda  
18 and that it is all made up. I believe there are bad  
19 actors that are doing bad things and if we allowed a  
20 self-regulated system, I am not sure we would get to  
21 the heart of the matter which is, how do you live in  
22 a more humane society? Now, I agree with you. I'm  
23 not someone who believes, you know, were going to  
24 tell people they can't wear leather or eat meat or  
25 have certain animals that operate in their lives in

2 some way, then I think that there are limits. And to  
3 try to figure out what those limits are is really  
4 helpful, but in the-- what I heard from Mr. Oten  
5 earlier is a self-regulated system that has not  
6 really been tested anywhere else and where there is a  
7 disagreement just in the testimony that I had in the  
8 back and forth that I had with him on science and on  
9 what certain scientists believe is humane and other  
10 scientists believe is inhumane, it becomes a  
11 difficult thing to achieve. And that's why I was  
12 trying to asked the question in a few moments ago is  
13 are there other more ethical, what I would consider  
14 to be, more ethical fabrics and materials that  
15 evolved us away from fur farming in from the trapping  
16 of animals which, in my estimation and involves the  
17 level of cruelty to still support an important  
18 manufacturing industry, but at the same time says we  
19 are not going to needlessly, unnecessarily, kill  
20 animals just for the purposes of wearing them. We  
21 may not agree on that exact topic, but I am trying to  
22 figure out are their programs, their incentives, or  
23 their government grants, their machines that could be  
24 used that we could continue to support the

2 manufacturing sector, but not in the exact way that  
3 it exists right now?

4           NICHOLAS SEEKAS: So if I could briefly  
5 answer that, I think many-- there is a lot of valid  
6 questions there and there are probably some  
7 solutions. And I think that is probably the dialogue  
8 we should be having. I think a ban doesn't make  
9 sense. We all probably know that. We are probably  
10 the oldest, you know-- We've been clothing people  
11 since the beginning of mankind. Is that right now?  
12 Does it make sense for 2019? Maybe not, but we can  
13 have an intelligent conversation on what we do to  
14 make sure that, is that this is still something that  
15 people still want in some way, they have a reason to  
16 want this whether it is culturally, for whatever  
17 reason, that those voices aren't just stamped out. I  
18 just think you can't just go one to be-- one way or  
19 the other. It has to be some kind of compromise to  
20 figure out the best way where animal welfare, which  
21 we believe has to be the highest standard, that that  
22 has to be incorporated. And there are third  
23 parties-- Not your--

24           SPEAKER JOHNSON: If--

2 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Not either side taking  
3 part--

4 SPEAKER JOHNSON: If there was a--  
5 Respectfully, I think it's good that we are having  
6 this conversation and back and forth. If there was a  
7 way to achieve that, which hasn't-- I haven't seen  
8 yet, that would be a, I think, good conversation I  
9 have. But part of the concern that I had is today,  
10 even on that earlier panel when I was having that  
11 back and forth and we ask questions about the size of  
12 the cages that minx were being held in, if they are  
13 an average of 24 inches long and they're being held  
14 in a cage that is 36 inches long, these are things  
15 that I very significant concerns over and I felt like  
16 there was-- there hasn't been full transparency from  
17 the folks that I was asking the questions too. Oh, I  
18 don't know the answer to that. I don't know the  
19 answer to that. If we are going to have a  
20 conversation about these things, I think we need to  
21 have all the facts on the table. If there are  
22 certain misleading videos, I don't want to see them.  
23 I want to know the facts.

24 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Yes.

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And I feel like we  
3 should operate factually on how things are in, to me,  
4 factually, if animals are being treated a certain  
5 way, I don't feel comfortable with that. At the  
6 exact same time, I don't want significant job losses,  
7 which is why I am asking, are there things we could  
8 do as a city and as a government to continue to  
9 support family businesses, legacy businesses overall,  
10 to still give something that is marketable and  
11 attractive to the public that moves towards a more  
12 humane society. And that is the balance that I am  
13 trying to strike, but I don't feel like I have been  
14 given a path to achieve that at this point.

15 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: I was trained as an  
16 analyst before I was doing-- and to come into this  
17 and I think that what you are saying makes a lot of  
18 sense. I think that we all have to explore on both  
19 sides to get the real facts because on both sides, if  
20 I may, there is some misinformation or maybe it's not  
21 clear. It's cloudy. I think that is first and  
22 foremost and once the facts are laid out in  
23 everything, then you can put together a path to move  
24 forward. The prior to that, tinges, you know, cut  
25 something off without knowing that, you can't.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

226

2 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Facts are really  
3 important to me.

4 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Yes.

5 SPEAKER JOHNSON: And I really want to  
6 operate in that way. So if there is information that  
7 hasn't been shared with me, though I have been having  
8 conversations with furriers, and they have been  
9 trying to give me information. But, again, I felt  
10 like today's some of the earlier panels that I was  
11 side, I don't feel like there was a level of  
12 transparency or a level of self-reflection. I mean,  
13 said, are there any-- do you think there is any  
14 abuse going on? And the answer I got earlier was no.  
15 I mean, that is shockingly here. You can be semi-  
16 self-reflective and say, you know what, there are  
17 some bad actors. They are ruining the name of our  
18 industry. We need to do a better job. We need to  
19 root them out. We want to-- I didn't hear that.  
20 And now is one of the major representatives speaking  
21 on behalf of the industry who is here today. So it  
22 feels hard to have an intelligent conversation about  
23 this when there isn't that recognition or self-  
24 reflection involved. And so, I'm happy to continue  
25 this conversation. I really appreciate you taking

2 the time out of your busy day and, of course, how  
3 emotional this is to be here for you today. And I  
4 appreciate the panel for being today and sticking  
5 around.

6 NICHOLAS SEEKAS: Thank you.

7 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

8 [Background comments]

9 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Jana Sezbarro, Dr.  
10 Eileen Jefferson, Eleanor Molbilgot. And we have a  
11 Brumis Gard, Echo Pal Faux Fur.

12 [Background comments]

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Jana Sezbarro, Dr.  
14 Eileen Jefferson, Eleanor Molbilgot, Brumis Gard.  
15 Nora Constance Marina, Paula Gavino, Katarina  
16 Trabaso. Paula Gavino, Nora Constance Marino,  
17 Katerina Trabaso.

18 [Background comments]

19 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: All right. You may  
20 begin.

21 NORA CONSTANCE MARINO: Good afternoon. My  
22 name is Nora Constance Marino. I'm an attorney. I'm  
23 a former First Lieutenant JAG officer in the United  
24 States Army Reserves. I received an honorable  
25 discharge. I'm currently a commission on the Tax

2 Limousine Commission, although I'm not here in that  
3 official capacity today. I am here in my capacity as  
4 a concerned citizen and also the President of an  
5 Organization called the Animal Cruelty Exposure Fund.

6 I don't want to repeat any of the testimony that's  
7 been given. It's already very late in the day, so I  
8 just want to point out a few things-- a few points  
9 that are follow-ups of other people's testimony.

10 First of all, I want to clarify something. An  
11 attorney for the opposition to the bill stated that  
12 Lemon Vs. Kurtzman, which is a 1971 US Supreme Court  
13 Case hold that this type of law that this type of law  
14 would be in violation of the establishment clause.

15 It wouldn't. My law practice specialized and  
16 concentrates in Constitutional law issues and civil  
17 rights violations. And that is simply not true. I  
18 can't explain that in a minute and three seconds, but  
19 it's not. I understand that people are worried about  
20 losing jobs and losing businesses, but evolution  
21 sometimes just dictates that. And as the speakers  
22 side, there are times when inner reflection is  
23 necessary. Yes. We decided ivory isn't appropriate  
24 and there have been laws put a place in the. Years  
25 ago, husband could legally be his wife. The

2 expression rule of thumb comes from the fact that a  
3 husband could beat his wife with a rod that did not  
4 exceed the width of his thumb. We decided that  
5 wasn't right. Laws evolve and change with society  
6 and if New York City is going to be the progressive  
7 city and that we want it to be, we have to engage in  
8 progress and realizing that animals are sentient  
9 beings, we are the dominant species on this planet.  
10 We have an obligation to other animals. And there is  
11 no choice here. We don't have to choose you have to  
12 care about humans or animals. Guess what, we can  
13 care about everybody. And I am in full support of  
14 this bill. It's a humane bill. It's a progressive  
15 bill. In New York City should be leading the way  
16 with these types of bills. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

18 KATERINA TRABASO: My name is Katerina  
19 Trabaso, a professor at St. John's University.  
20 First, thank you for introducing 1476 in the  
21 opportunity to speak in support of this bill. I  
22 recently learned that a few individuals are calling  
23 this a racist bill. It is unfortunate that anyone  
24 would use arrays to defend an industry that  
25 represents apathy, cruelty, exploitation, oppression,

2 slavery, and torture, all of which are not excluded  
3 to humans. I would remind these same individuals  
4 that fur is used as a social status symbol of luxury  
5 and vanity mostly worn by white privileged women. It  
6 is criminal for anyone to support an unimaginable  
7 cruelty and cruel industry, especially when we do not  
8 need to wear something that represents exploitation.  
9 Like humans, animals are not commodities. Another  
10 excuse presented was the loss of jobs. Like many  
11 other things, jobs evolve, jobs are not secure, nor  
12 should they be when it involves oppression. Remember  
13 that slavery was a business and legal and a personal  
14 choice. This is one of the reasons the biggest names  
15 in fashion are no longer using fur. To the furriers,  
16 this is not your demise. This is an opportunity to  
17 create more jobs with many new different  
18 alternatives. Fur is antiquated and wearing it in  
19 2019 appears primitive. Be on the right side of  
20 history by ending the sale of fur. You can do this,  
21 New York City. Thank you.

22 PAULA GAVINO: Hello. Thank you for--

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Hit the-- Hit the  
24 button on the microphone.

2 PAULA GAVINO: Oh. My name is Paula  
3 Gavino. I'm a canine behaviorist in New York City.  
4 So almost all of us share a very special affinity  
5 with individuals of other species. Many of us share  
6 that bond with furbearing animals. We share our  
7 lives with dogs and cats at home that are direct  
8 relatives of animals used in the fur industry. Thus,  
9 it's so painful to walk the streets of New York City  
10 during winter and see their skins on display of  
11 department stores thinking, that could be my dog. A  
12 member of my family. While animals should be free  
13 display those things? For is only beautiful in its  
14 original owner. That's why I am speaking out today  
15 support of Intro 1476. Each year, over 100 million  
16 furbearing animals die miserably in fur traps, many  
17 leaving their babies behind to die of starvation and  
18 other equally inhumane deaths. What we have been  
19 hearing here about fur farmers treating the animals  
20 humanely is totally false. The truth is, there is no  
21 humane or respectful way to slaughter an animal or  
22 someone just for some things so vain and selfish as a  
23 fashion garment. As the stewards of this planet, we  
24 have to be more empathetic towards other animals and  
25 trying to make their lives better. Also, we don't

2 think about it. Their lives have a meaning and a  
3 purpose and that-- as does the lives of each of us.  
4 Their lives is there only thing they have. Life they  
5 experience through their senses and emotions.  
6 Through their interactions with others and their  
7 environment. Animals used in the fur industry have  
8 been deprived of all of this. They have no autonomy  
9 whatsoever, no natural environment. We have robbed  
10 them of everything that is natural for them.

11 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

12 PAULA GAVINO: Sure.

13 ARNOLD BRUNOIS: Good afternoon. Thank  
14 you for giving me the opportunity to express my views  
15 here. My name is Arnold Brunois. I represent the  
16 company, Echolpel, the leader and luxury faux fur.  
17 We work with many internationally renowned fashion  
18 brands based in New York. After having reviewed  
19 carefully a briefing that is at stake, we think a ban  
20 on the sale of firm products is a good idea for  
21 several reasons that go far beyond mere commercial  
22 reasons. Bands already exist in other areas. They  
23 provide a frame and have a positive impact on  
24 society. For example, more plastic bag bands are  
25 being implemented and they have demonstrated their

2 positive impact. Evidence shows that smart and  
3 judicious bans can shape greener and more responsible  
4 consumption patterns. Bans on the trade of  
5 endangered species also already exist and are a very  
6 good thing. Wild animals are protected while it is  
7 still possible to have the logo for from these  
8 species. Thanks to the imitations of a label info  
9 for. If a ban on the sale of real fur products would  
10 be voted, that would not mean the end of the fur  
11 look. It would just mean that there are new ways to  
12 present old ideas. Vegan leather is booming.  
13 Emerging startups are creating textiles made from  
14 apples or silk made in a petri dish injecting a new  
15 energy in the way that fashion is done today.  
16 Regarding animal welfare, even if we do not live in a  
17 [inaudible 04:32:44] world, reducing the numbers of  
18 animals used is positive. The scientific community,  
19 for instance, has long adopted the concept of a  
20 reduction when it comes to animal testing. The  
21 concept of reduction is key. Fur bans help the  
22 textile industry to reduce its use of animals. In  
23 2018, a 20 percent reduction in animal exportation  
24 has been reported which means millions of animals

2 saved. So our vision is more recycling, more bio  
3 fabrication, and less factory farming.

4 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

5 ARNOLD BRUNOIS: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you for  
7 testifying. I appreciate it. I'm going to call up  
8 the next panel. We have Susan Romano, Eugene Cio or  
9 Ceo, Farah Del Ruvar, Donald Levy, Eric Hannerman or  
10 Eric Hannergeran. And again, you can submit testimony  
11 at the front desk here if you cannot stay. We are  
12 also taking testimony through email until Monday  
13 which you email to the Speaker's office. Or if you  
14 cannot email, you can write something and bring it  
15 in, we'll-- the Speaker's office will be taking it  
16 until Monday. Head-- Ed Haweeva. Matt Peck. John  
17 Pacanis. John Pacanis, Matt Peck, Ed Haweeva.

18 [Background comments]

19 LEGAL COUNSEL: Try these three.

20 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Stacie Panerebs,  
21 Tincy Strune. Tincy Strewer. Leanne Barbs.

22 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: You can begin  
24 testifying.

2 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you for letting me  
3 speak. I am in-- I live in Council members Keith  
4 Power's district. I'm a small business owner. I've  
5 been in the fashion industry since I was seventh  
6 grade and I am very much-- I have passion for this  
7 industry and I have passion for the fur industry. I  
8 had rewritten this speech, but I have to rewrite it  
9 over and over again. I want you to understand the  
10 people in this industry are elderly.

11 [Background comments]

12 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Please keep your  
13 voices down.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: And they won't be able  
15 to use social medial like you and I can. They can't  
16 speak for themselves. They will not be able to go  
17 find another job. I am in the apparel industry and I  
18 wanted to be present here so that you can hear me.  
19 Even in the apparel industry, salespeople can't find  
20 a job, let alone you want someone who has only been  
21 working in this industry for 50 years or 40 years to  
22 go do what? They can only do washing floors. These  
23 are-- Imagine your parents building a business with  
24 their bare hands and then, all of a sudden, the  
25 committee that I find in my committee, you are here

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING  
2 to protect me as a small business owner, you're going  
3 to take that away from me and from them. You talk  
4 about insatiate beings. Pass the most progressive  
5 reproductive, antiabortion-- I mean, abortion laws  
6 in New York. That is amazing. It is amazing that I  
7 have the right to choose when to have-- when to  
8 abort the child. But you are telling me that I  
9 cannot self. The child is also 24 weeks and that is  
10 definitely a living being. You pass the most amazing  
11 ban to protect our environment and that is plastic.  
12 Thank you. Thank you for doing that. But then you  
13 promote anti-evniron-- I mean, you're against the  
14 environmental at the same time. All the chemicals  
15 that you are saying that goes in the faux fur, it  
16 takes 100 years for that to disintegrate. Please  
17 help sustain the garment center. Sustain our  
18 businesses. Just think about parents, your parents.  
19 We are not professional politicians. I am here to  
20 let you know that I have worked since I was in  
21 seventh grade.

22 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

23 UNIDENTIFIED: And I am very proud of  
24 it.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

217

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you for  
3 testifying.

4 JOHN PATCANIS: Hello, Council. All of  
5 you who is here, who is not. Thank you for listening  
6 to our testimonies today. My name is John Patcanis.  
7 I'm 42 years and a second generation business. Very  
8 proud. Very thankful for what was passed onto me and  
9 the industry I work in. I live in. Literally live  
10 in. I have 10 employees. That's my family. My next  
11 of family, other than my blood, that's my family and  
12 I support them and they support me and we support one  
13 another. They can't go find a job because they've  
14 been with me for 20 years. And guess what. In 20  
15 years, they've never had unemployment. If you put  
16 out this industry now, you're going to have thousands  
17 of people on unemployment, I promise you. And back  
18 to the beavers on the state flag swimming downstream,  
19 if you don't have Department of Conservation, you  
20 better get some engineers because you're going to  
21 have a lot of flooding. I promise. Okay. It's  
22 freedom of choice. Let the small businesses  
23 continue. They built this country. They really did  
24 and you're shutting us down for personal goals of  
25 certain people that have the wrong facts. The facts

2 are totally wrong. I invited the whole Council to my  
3 factory showroom and nobody ever called me and asked  
4 I'd like to come down. I'd like to make an  
5 appointment. I'll tell you all about it. I could do  
6 it blindfolded. Blindfolded. I buy skins from the  
7 auction. I know what grades are. The farmers, the  
8 farmers produce top-quality because it's to their  
9 best interest. Their best interest is to get the  
10 better dollar. Yes, it's about money. Just about  
11 politics. Politics is about money, too. Making the  
12 right decisions, you know? So please, come get the  
13 facts. We've got the facts for you.

14 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

15 JOHN PATCANIS: Don't let us down.

16 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

17 JOHN PATCANIS: Thank you.

18 TINA STOVA: Thank you for letting me  
19 speak. My name is Tina Stova. I come here from  
20 Denmark and you talk a lot about the facts. I've  
21 seen so many facts today that are not true and that I  
22 cannot recognize from my job from home. I am a  
23 veterinarian. I am the head of Veterinary Diagnostic  
24 Department at Copenhagen Fur in Denmark. Copenhagen  
25 Fur is one of the largest fur auction houses in the

2 world and we process the vast majority of the  
3 European furs to the USA. I am here today to oppose  
4 to the ban and rebut welfare concerns. I have a PhD  
5 in epidemiology which means surveillance of animal  
6 health and preventive measures. I have worked with  
7 mink in seven years making sure that our mink get the  
8 best conditions through evidenced-based research.  
9 Our standards does not allow any animal production  
10 unless the welfare can be maintained at an excellent  
11 level and well kept, healthy animals equals better  
12 bidding results and a higher quality of the fur. In  
13 my job, I go to visit the farms and I work with the  
14 animals in all seasons and I find that the animal  
15 welfare are very high and that is because minks are  
16 allowed to meet naturally. They build a nest before  
17 they deliver. They give birth unrestricted and they  
18 nurse their own young. And when it all ends, they  
19 are euthanized in a humane way just outside their  
20 cages. All this means that there is a very large  
21 potential for animal welfare and therefore the  
22 farmers just have to take very good care of their  
23 animals to make sure that this potential is  
24 fulfilled. In Europe, we have a welfare system which  
25 is also part of Fur Mark. We have independently

2 measured the actual welfare state of mink. It's an  
3 external company who measures the welfare. We don't  
4 self-regulate. They have measured the mink welfare  
5 on 2700 mink farm saying you're up. Based on very  
6 low levels of problems, the welfare turns out to be  
7 at a very high level in most farms. Openness and  
8 transparency are key in Danish mink farming in our  
9 doors are always open to visitors. We are very proud  
10 of our animal welfare and we welcome you all if you  
11 Denmark. Come see for yourself.

12 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

13 LEANNE BARNES: Good evening. My name  
14 is Leanne Barnes and I am a handbag accessories  
15 designer with operations in Los Angeles, Atlanta, and  
16 New York City. And today is been quite eye-opening  
17 in a number of different ways. I use both faux, as  
18 well as what I call real genuine hair on. And the  
19 proposed legislation, I'm a little bit confused on  
20 because it says that-- The New York City proposed  
21 legislation says that it applies to any animal skin  
22 in whole or in part with the hair, fleece, or fur  
23 fibers. Now, my understanding with the Los Angeles  
24 law is that that would not include hair on cow or  
25 shearling or fleece. So I can produce there no

2 problem. I am an ethical designer and I believe in  
3 full sustainability and circularity. Can you expound  
4 upon what this is? Is it true that the law would  
5 restrict me and banned me from using hair on cow and  
6 shearling?

7 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: As it currently is  
8 strapped in, yes. But the staff can get back to you  
9 if you have further questions or suggestions.

10 LEANNE BARNES: Well, I just-- I  
11 thought in the very first testimony with a  
12 veterinarian that was speaking on behalf of proposing  
13 for the band, see inside and stated clearly that  
14 animals that are used for food, their skin is a  
15 byproduct and that's the skin that I use and that  
16 skin I use on these bags and I use every scrap, even  
17 down to this little hair tie that is made by  
18 survivors of domestic violence. So I'm a huge  
19 proponent of using the entirety of a species and the  
20 wellbeing of animals, but I would hope that this law  
21 will be amended so that it won't prohibit me from  
22 participating in New York's amazing trade shows at  
23 the Javits Center to help me sell my products to the  
24 world and be a beacon. New York City offers so much  
25 and offers so much inspiration. I hope that you all

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

252

2 will take a look at the bill and make the right  
3 recommendations and not ban the promotion and  
4 businesses that flourish here in New York City.

5 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Okay. Thank you.  
6 Your testimony is all recorded, so the staff will  
7 over it-- will look at all the testimony given  
8 today.

9 JOHN PATCANIS: Any questions?

10 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I don't have any  
11 questions. Thank you.

12 LEANNE BARNES: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Next panel.

14 TINA STOVA: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Roberto Benelli,  
16 Nicole Hall, Nina Jackel, Paloma Iglesiasoto, Paloma  
17 Iglesiasoto, Drew Carnegie, Linda Mann, Or Jill  
18 Carnegie. Sorry. And Linda Mann. Jill Carnegie.  
19 Linda Mann.

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: Oh. Someone's coming.

21 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Okay. You may  
22 begin.

23 NINA JACKEL: Dear Council members, thank  
24 you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Nina  
25 Jackel and I am the founder Lady Freethinker, a

2 nonprofit media organization that publishes news and  
3 grassroots actions to build a more compassionate  
4 world for all species. Our readership of millions of  
5 people includes tens of thousands of subscribers who  
6 live right here in New York and care very much about  
7 animals and would like to see this bill passed. I  
8 would like to testify wholeheartedly in support of  
9 Intro 1476 because the plain truth is that we no  
10 longer live in a world that requires inflicting  
11 barbaric torture upon animals for clothing. From  
12 coyotes chewing their own limbs off in a desperate  
13 attempt to escape steel dog traps, two raccoon dogs  
14 living their short lives in pain and filth before  
15 being electrocuted and skinned alive, the fur trade  
16 is undeniably cruel. The rest of the world is waking  
17 up to this particular of the in taking steps to stop  
18 it. New York has already fallen behind cities like  
19 Los Angeles and San Francisco, which have already  
20 banned fur. As the fashion capital that the entire  
21 globe looks to when deciding what to add to their  
22 closets, New York City has a responsibility to send a  
23 message that animal suffering is never in style.  
24 There are two very clear choices here. New York City  
25 can take the ethical, commendable, and progressive

2 step of banning fur sales or it can cling to the past  
3 and continue to endorse violence against animals  
4 simply because people make money selling fur. I  
5 believe that new York is better than that and I hope  
6 that you do too and that you will do the right thing  
7 by voting to pass Intro 1476, ensuring that New York  
8 remains a leader and not just fashion, but in  
9 compassionate legislation, as well. Thank you very  
10 much.

11 ROBERTO BURNELLI: Good afternoon, Council  
12 members. My name is Roberto Burnelli. I run an  
13 animal rights advocates see organization called The  
14 Animals Battalion. I have been a full-time animal  
15 rights activists for 11 years now. The one issue  
16 that compelled me down this path was the never-ending  
17 slaughter of animals by the fur industry. They  
18 opposition will tell you that this is simply a matter  
19 of consumer choices. What the fur industry truly is  
20 as legalized brutality. The furbearing animals used  
21 by this industry are killed in numerous horrific ways  
22 from steel traps that crush their bones to snares  
23 that choke them to death to anal and vaginally  
24 electrocution. Animals raised in fur farms  
25 experience malnourishment, disease, and forced

2 cannibalism before they are killed. In countries  
3 where there are no animal welfare standards, these  
4 animals are even skinned alive or bludgeoned to  
5 death. A simple Google search will show you videos  
6 of everything I just described. I ask you to  
7 honestly see for yourselves. This is an industry  
8 that runs on animal abuse. Animals killed by the fur  
9 trade are no different than the companion animals you  
10 have at home. The fur trade victims are simply the  
11 free-roaming counterparts of the dogs, cats, and  
12 rabbits who are part of your families. If there were  
13 nothing wrong with the fur industry, its defenders  
14 would not hesitate to show you how there for is  
15 produced. They do not do that. Nor did these family  
16 businesses show the children the process of how the  
17 fur is obtained. To their objections, I respond by  
18 saying I, like many of them, like many workers, and  
19 also working-class emigrant who has one time faced  
20 unemployment, that has never been a justification to  
21 support animal abuse. Council members, you have one  
22 question to answer. Is New York City an example of  
23 civilization or savagery? Because if we are to be  
24 leaders for the rest of the world, we cannot allow  
25 the brutalities and vulgarity of the animal abusing

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

256

2 for trade in our city. I am imploring you to support  
3 Intro 1476. Thank you for your time.

4 JILL CARNEGIE: Hello. Thank you for  
5 the opportunity. My name is Jill Carnegie and I am  
6 testifying today as a resident of Hell's Kitchen and  
7 a local business owner. Thank you to my Council  
8 member, Speaker Corey Johnson for championing this  
9 bill. My company is NUMU Vegan which is currently  
10 headquartered in Brooklyn and we have created and  
11 produced nondairy mozzarella cheese. I'm excited to  
12 report that we are fully funded and have incredible  
13 distribution partners lined up to take NUMU Vegan  
14 cheese nationwide this summer and what we have found  
15 is the largest and smartest dairy companies are  
16 clamoring to work with us and the reason is because  
17 they are finding that the dairy industry is  
18 completely unsustainable, both environmentally and  
19 financially and I bring this up today because we are  
20 seeing that writing on the wall with the fur  
21 industry, as well. If we can take something as  
22 quintessential as the slice of New York City pizza  
23 and replicated in an ethical way without sacrificing  
24 taste or texture or experience, then I see no reason  
25 why we cannot remake or makeover, if you will, an

2 industry that, you know, New York has always been  
3 proud to be ahead on, which is fashion. And New York  
4 City is also an example of consumerism to the highest  
5 degree which, frankly, I don't have a big problem  
6 with as a business owner. But that also means that  
7 we need to acknowledge conscious consumerism.

8 Labeling issues have been brought up many times today  
9 and that's a very, very big concern for conscious  
10 consumers who are overburdened with researching the  
11 nuances of labeling across so many industries with  
12 every decision that we make. When we are in a city  
13 like New York, which is not only progressive, but  
14 also a sanctuary city for humans, sometimes we need  
15 to face the fact that it is necessary to legislate  
16 compassion. And we need to take leadership and show  
17 consumers better way. So thank you so much in  
18 advance for your support of this bill.

19 PALOMA IGLESIAS: Hello. My name is  
20 Paloma Iglesias and I am a resident from Harlem. I  
21 moved to the city a use ago and it's been a years ago  
22 when I was walking down Union Square on a cold  
23 December and got informed in a demo about the vial  
24 truth of this industry and a cruel and unfair  
25 standards that are in place for these animals and

2 just want to live just like us. I mean, we are just  
3 lucky that we are born human. If we were born--  
4 What if we were born a fox or a mink? I'm pretty  
5 sure you wouldn't want to be scanned. It's common  
6 sense. Coming from a warmer place, I even thought  
7 that fur was banned in the 90s. Seeing all these  
8 gruesome videos and having the information at hands,  
9 it baffles me that people can still do this. I'm  
10 pretty sure that we all got introduced about the  
11 horrific acts of fur from even in the children's  
12 movies from 101 Dalmatians and I'm pretty sure most  
13 of us were in favor of the puppies to be safe, alive,  
14 and away from the vain and evil hands of Cruella  
15 Deville. This is something that has been longed for.  
16 Especially in this progressive city. I am in favor  
17 of this law to pass and I'm coming from Puerto Rico.  
18 I have been eight years surviving the cold  
19 temperatures of NYC just fine without the use of fur  
20 due to the amazing technology and so many brands that  
21 are out there making the changes for consumers to  
22 have what we need to stay warm because that's the  
23 point of it, right? Everything that I have heard  
24 here comes from privileged people profiting off the  
25 lives of most honorable beings in our society: the

2 animals. Privileges when you think something is not  
3 a problem because it doesn't affect you. They don't  
4 see fur as cruel because it brings them profit. The  
5 reality is that this industry is going to end  
6 regardless. Most of the furs in the city are sold in  
7 department stores and if they phase out furs, no jobs  
8 are going to be lost. The small stores that  
9 specialize only on fur in the city can move on to  
10 other textiles. Faux fur is the future. There is no  
11 excuse to use the fervent assent, defenseless animals  
12 for a fashion statement. And he and all first status  
13 useless and all about money industry. As 2019. It's  
14 time to stop dragging the past into our future. A  
15 future generation does not want to. We are smarter  
16 than that. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

18 LINDA MANN: Good afternoon. My name is  
19 Linda Mann and I come to you as a person who had a  
20 wonderful career as a buyer of women's clothing. My  
21 career spanned an amazing 40 years because I chose to  
22 adapt to changing times. And now, these are times  
23 that call for change. We live in a time where it is  
24 no longer possible to deny what is happening. We  
25 can't say we didn't know. We didn't see. So I ask

2 you with great respect to respect those who, although  
3 they cannot speak with words or cast votes, they  
4 speak more importantly to our hearts. I ask the fur  
5 industry to not mistake my passion for ignorance and  
6 I asked them to not insult us with talk of  
7 sustainability, humane slaughter, or ethical for.  
8 The truth is extremely different. Albert Schweitzer  
9 said we have no right to inflict suffering and death  
10 on another living creature unless there is some  
11 unavoidable necessity for it. So it is on that note  
12 that I ask you for the ones whose paws are crushed in  
13 steel traps, for the ones who are skinned alive, and  
14 for the ones who are anally electrocuted, why, if you  
15 have the power, wouldn't you use it to save a life.  
16 If I may paraphrase, whoever destroys the soul, it is  
17 considered as if they destroyed an entire world and  
18 whoever saves alive, it is considered as if they  
19 saved an entire world. You have been given a great,  
20 great gift. You have the opportunity to save the  
21 world. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Next we  
23 have Karen Gibberson, Jackie Olemon, Peter  
24 Speliopopilus, Carla Dawn Berley. Karen Gibberson,  
25 Jackie Climan, Peter Sperliopopilus, and Carla Dawn

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

261

2 Berley. Harriet Nathan, Victoria Saporus. Jason  
3 Rogowski, Virginis Boris O'Hara. Okay. Great. You  
4 may begin.

5 KAREN GIBERSON: Is that on? My name is  
6 Karen Giberson and I'm the President of the  
7 Accessories Council. 320 corporate member, not-for-  
8 profit based in New York. New York is the hub of our  
9 industry and most of our members are headquartered  
10 here, have stores here, showrooms here, or  
11 participate in trade shows here to sell their  
12 products. We are, in fact, headquartered in the same  
13 building as Speaker Johnson and we share the space  
14 with over 20 companies that sell and manufacturer for  
15 products. I have some serious concerns as the law is  
16 currently written. The title fur apparel does not  
17 represent the scope of what would be covered. In  
18 fact, as written, it covers shearling, hair on calf  
19 skin and other food first items. These are not  
20 materials that our industry has traditionally defined  
21 as fur. So notifying our companies about this  
22 potential bill has been very challenging. In fact,  
23 most every designer that is been mentioned today that  
24 has given up for uses hair on calf skin and many of  
25 them use shearling. Hair on calf skin is leather.

2 It is a one-step difference in processing the leather  
3 compared to the issues that many of the people in the  
4 room are wearing. I'm concerned about the rush to  
5 push this legislation through. We know there will be  
6 at least 7500 jobs lost and we haven't had a  
7 reasonable amount of time to fully understand the  
8 economic impact of this bill as it considers these  
9 other materials. In addition to the job losses, we  
10 know that New York residents in our companies will do  
11 business outside of the city where they will  
12 undoubtedly purchase other items, buy food, and spend  
13 their dollars. Mostly, we are concerned about the  
14 slippery slope of a ban. We have heard many  
15 suggestions as the Fur Mark and we endorse the choice  
16 of materials.

17 VICTORIA SUPORAS: Hi. My name is  
18 Victoria-- Oh. I'm sorry. Okay. Hi. My name is  
19 Victoria Suporas and I've founded one of this new  
20 company. Our store [inaudible 04:59:42] district 3  
21 and our Councilman Speaker Corey Johnson. We're a  
22 family-owned small business that my husband and I  
23 have been around for over 24 years. we mainly  
24 specialize in high-end shearling coats, fur, leather,  
25 and accessories that are locally manufactured right

2 here. Right in New York. And we're selling that  
3 accessories and fur and shearling right from our  
4 stores. Right from our store. And I'm here today to  
5 ask you and just really, really give you this  
6 message: Please ban the fur ban. It's going to hurt  
7 a lot of people. A lot of families and it's-- these  
8 people, it's not-- Most of them, it's not that young  
9 people anymore that can find-- go and find jobs very  
10 easily. It's not-- It was before [inaudible  
11 05:00:40] like it's how easy going to be to find a  
12 job. It's almost impossible and that people it's  
13 like 47-- 45. They have to go and study for  
14 something else. And like in my case, I have my  
15 husband and me in the same business and it's a lot of  
16 like you heard before. It's a family business where  
17 there's a husband and wife in same business. We  
18 don't have another income coming. So it's like what  
19 does that mean for us? It's like we're gonna (sic)  
20 wake up one morning right after this ban gonna-- if  
21 it's going to go full effect and we just have no job.  
22 We don't have no next month to pay rent, like our  
23 insur-- medical insurance, our daughter's college.  
24 And any expenses to-- I'm not talking just about me.  
25 I'm talking in my family. I'm talking for example

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

261

2 for every single person. Just don't think about the  
3 numbers, 7000 and ha-- seven and a half thousand  
4 people are going to lose their jobs. It's really  
5 much more. Think about their family, about the kids,  
6 about their older parents. Also, I have a really--

7 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. I'm  
8 going to have to ask you to wrap up. Thank you.

9 VICTORIA SUPORAS: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I appreciate it.  
11 Thank you.

12 VICTORIA SUPORAS: Okay.

13 HARRIET NATHAN: Hi. My name is Harriet  
14 Nathan. I currently live in Ben Kallis' district. I  
15 had my story prepared for days, but it appears that  
16 the truth and New Yorker stories don't really need to  
17 be heard. Many lives have been told today, but here  
18 is the fact. This industry is made up of proud,  
19 talented, and hard-working people. Multi-  
20 generational family businesses. I was in a different  
21 industry when I was younger. I was a woman in big  
22 corporate industry and I left that to come to this  
23 industry. I chose it. This was my choice to do  
24 this. I now work with my husband and I have a small  
25 business in New York City, but it seems that the

2 Council is looking to close many small businesses,  
3 including mine. My husband and I have put our blood,  
4 sweat, and tears and money into this business that we  
5 won't be able to sell. That the proposed for ban  
6 wants to shut down. We recently moved back into the  
7 city to achieve our dream of living here again and be  
8 closer to our business. Back to the city that we  
9 love. That we thought was a proponent of small  
10 businesses. But if this ban goes through when we  
11 lose our business, we will not be able to stay and  
12 afford to live in New York City. The end of another  
13 dream for us. We are too old to get another job. To  
14 start again. We have tirelessly worked here in New  
15 York City for many years. We don't have a safety  
16 net. We only have our business. We have no other  
17 jobs and our lives are 100 percent intertwined. We  
18 have given all of ourselves to work here in New York  
19 City, to live here in New York City. The city that  
20 endorses small businesses. So, now what? What do we  
21 do? Please don't shut us down. Please.

22 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

23 ARTHUR GOLDSTEIN: Arthur Goldstein. I  
24 represent the Accessories Council. I just want to  
25 clarify one remark that was made earlier. The firm

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

266

2 Mark was described as self-regulating about three  
3 times today. It is on top of government regulations  
4 and eight is independent. So it's not like the  
5 industry is controlling this whole process. It's  
6 whatever the roles that will be set up when the Fur  
7 Mark is in place. It is not self-regulating. This  
8 is the key point I wanted to make. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. I'll  
10 call the next panel. We have Vanessa Saldana, Vivian  
11 Barna, Alan Resnick, James Scottall.

12 LEGAL COUNSEL: Here's two more in case  
13 what looks like--

14 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Joshua Catcher,  
15 Michelle Poli.

16 LEGAL COUNSEL: Here. Call these two.

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Matthew Schwartz.  
18 Linda Obuchosca. You submitted testimony?

19 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. We  
21 appreciate it. Thank you. Erica Shinart, Laura  
22 Lapardo. Leonardo Angiano. Rebecca Wolfe. Rebecca  
23 Wolfe. Elizabeth Carado. Beshelis Nichole.

24 LEGAL COUNSEL: You can just let them  
25 start.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

267

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Okay. You can  
3 begin.

4 JAMES SCOTTO: Good evening. My name  
5 is James Scotto and I'm a physical education and  
6 health teacher at a small school in Manhattan for  
7 grades eight through 12. I come here and strong  
8 support of 1476 and I have to say, no matter how many  
9 times I hear of first supporter our industry state  
10 that it's humane or acceptable or that they love  
11 their animals, I feel like I'm in an alternate  
12 universe. Under no condition shut any of this  
13 barbarism be occurring. This becomes especially true  
14 in a society that considers itself civil and  
15 progressive. The fur ban becomes even more urgent  
16 considering that this massive amount of suffering  
17 inflicted upon the most innocent and defenseless  
18 amongst us is all perpetrated so that someone can  
19 feel fashionable in a fur coat or put on a hat with a  
20 fur pom-pom on it. I'll never forget the day I  
21 looked in the fur industry and watched undercover  
22 videos. I was in shock for days. A few days I could  
23 barely speak. I cried. I felt nauseous. I couldn't  
24 process the fact that what I was seeing was actually  
25 legal and happening to animals all day every day.

2 Animals who are abused for their fur are sentient  
3 beings who have complex emotions and feel pain and  
4 suffering, just like the companion animals who are  
5 beloved members of many of our families.

6 Fortunately, humans have skills to find employment  
7 and fellow humans to support us through transition.

8 We don't experience the agony of being stuck in a  
9 trap or intensively confined or getting anally  
10 electrocuted or being scanned while still conscious.

11 If it is humane to absolutely brutalize animals for  
12 fashion as the fur industry members have said, then  
13 finding a job seems relatively trauma free. What do  
14 the animals have? They have nothing but unimaginable  
15 suffering and misery. The only ones coming to lend a  
16 hand are those who will further brutalize the animal.

17 If people in New York City in the year 2019 are okay  
18 with this, then there is no way we can call  
19 ourselves, as a society, civilized or progressive.

20 The legality of fur is, no question, a horrific  
21 statement about our humanity. Thank you.

22 ERICA SHINAR: My name is Erica Shinar.

23 I reside in Park Slope Brooklyn. Thank you Council  
24 members to give me an opportunity to speak to you  
25 today. I want to thank city Council Speaker, Corey

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 269

3 Johnson, for proposing this legislation that would  
4 ban the sale of fur apparel in New York City. I also  
5 want to thank my councilmember from District 39, my  
6 Park Slope neighbor, Mr. Brad Lander, for cosponsoring  
7 Intro 1476, the fur apparel sales ban. Thank you so  
8 much, Mr. Lander, for supporting innocent animals who  
9 undergo so much agony to be, unnecessary fur coats  
10 for humans. You are giving your voice to those who  
11 have none, but, if they could speak, would certainly  
12 say, please save us from this horrible life and  
13 terrible death. I sincerely hope that all of your  
14 fellow council members follow your example. This is  
15 the ethical and humane thing to do. The fur sales  
16 ban is especially personal to me because my great  
17 uncle was a furrier in Brooklyn in the 1930s through  
18 the 1970s. My mother, who was in her late 80s,  
19 remembers that our uncle made her mother, my  
20 grandmother, a fur coat with her initials inside.  
21 When my sister and I were very young, he gave us what  
22 I remember were mink tails that we used for our  
23 Barbie dolls. I was too young to understand than the  
24 tear in pain those minks went through. I now know  
25 that these beautiful animals lived an awful life in a  
cage and died a horrendous staff by being gassed,

2 drowned, electrocuted or skinned alive. I loved my  
3 great uncle, but if he were alive today, I would have  
4 to ask him how he could continue to make fur apparel.  
5 Knowing that tortures these sentient beings with  
6 feelings of despair, agony, and pain just like ours,  
7 went through all their lives just to become a fur  
8 coat, hat, or the trim on a pair of gloves. My  
9 mother and I discussed in my being here today to  
10 speak in front of you. She, the niece of a furrier,  
11 grew up to become a lover of all animals. Can I  
12 continue?

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Just because of the  
14 fact that we still have--

15 ERICA SHINAR: I just want--

16 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: many dozen people.

17 ERICA SHINAR: to read my last  
18 paragraph. It's important to me.

19 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Okay. If you can  
20 do it quickly, that'd be great.

21 ERICA SHINAR: One of my personal  
22 heroes is the great founders of the ASPCA and the  
23 humane movement here in New York City, Henry Berg.  
24 Henry Berg memorably said, men will be just men when  
25 they are kind to animals. Please, council members,

2 let's again show the world that New York City is a  
3 leader when it comes to being just and compassionate  
4 both to men and animals. Please support him pass  
5 this animal protection bill into law in New York  
6 City. Thank you very much for listening.

7 NICOLE FISCHELIS: Good evening--

8 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Sorry. Just hit  
9 the button for the microphone. And, again, I'm not  
10 trying to be rude by cutting anyone off. I'm just  
11 trying to respect everyone else's time.

12 ERICA SHINAR: I'm done.

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Yeah. Yeah. I  
14 know. I'm not speaking to you. I'm speaking to the  
15 rest of the public [laughter] and I appreciate it.

16 ERICA SHINAR: I think I'm done.

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: But just being fair  
18 to everyone else here, I'm not cutting you off  
19 because I'm trying to be rude. Only because I want  
20 to be respectful of everyone else's time.

21 NICOLE FISCHELIS: Good evening. Thank you  
22 for having me tonight. My name is Nicole Fischelis.  
23 I live in Manhattan. My councilmember is Mr. Keith  
24 powers. Although I am born in France, I have worked  
25 for American store and retailer my entire career.

2 Staring in Paris, they needed a new hub for an  
3 American buying office who had presented the biggest  
4 store in America such as Sax's Fifth Avenue, Neiman  
5 Marcus, Bergdorf Goodman, and Marshall Field. I  
6 moved to New York to become the vice president of  
7 Saks Fifth Avenue then I went to work for Ferragamo  
8 as their worldwide fashion director and then,  
9 finally, with Macy's as a globe fashion director and  
10 forecaster. Today, I have my own consulting company.  
11 My life has been involved with fashion and fur and my  
12 family has worked in the fur business from Paris,  
13 London, New York. Fur has been part of generation of  
14 my family and I am here to oppose this bill that  
15 could end this part of my life and my culture. As a  
16 child, I watched my father and his team and admired  
17 the craft. The beautiful craft of the handwork and  
18 the passion that has been passed from generation to  
19 generation. Fur is not fast fashion. It a dedicated  
20 craft that has survived wars and conflict and  
21 provided families with income over their generations.  
22 The fur business has also contributed to the  
23 prosperity of the New York fashion and luxury  
24 business. Fur is part of the [inaudible 05:13:05] of  
25 an industry which gained worldwide recognition and as

2 [inaudible 05:13:12] New York. Fur is part of the  
3 New York history and heritage. It's part of its  
4 culture and that thousands of immigrants who have  
5 worked and contributed to the economy of this  
6 country. When I was at Saks, I worked at the global  
7 [inaudible 05:13:26] of the company and I discovered  
8 and bought many designers to America. I also  
9 supported a lot of American designers from the  
10 beginning which are now recognized companies and  
11 designers.

12 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Thank  
13 you.

14 NICOLE FISCHER: I am not finished.

15 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I know. But  
16 because of the time, we have to move forward. I'm  
17 sorry. You can submit that, again, for the record  
18 and it will be treated--

19 NICOLE FISCHER: Can I just say one more  
20 thing, please?

21 [Background comments]

22 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Just for timing, we  
23 can't. I'm sorry.

24 VANESSA SOLDANO: my name is Vanessa salt  
25 on out. I was born and raised in Staten Island, New

2 York and I currently live in District 49. My

3 designated Council member is Deborah Rose.

4 Unnecessary animal cruelty is all around us, however,

5 it is more apparent and undeniable in certain

6 industries than it is in others. The fur industry is

7 one of the many animal abusing industries that is

8 completely unnecessary in New York City. Not only

9 are there superior cruelty free and eco-friendly

10 alternatives to fur, but there is an entire

11 nonviolent growing industry that focuses on creating

12 compassionate fabrics and making compassionate

13 fashion and beauty choices. Choices that don't rely

14 on anally electrocuting, leg trapping, drowning, neck

15 breaking, skinning, and ultimately killing harmless,

16 innocent animals who deserve respect. The cruelty

17 free fashion industry is one of great opportunity,

18 for those of you that are concerned about your money,

19 despite the fact that there should be more prevalent

20 concerns on your minds. If you are here because you

21 are concerned about money, please be reminded that

22 fur industry money is filthy. Fur industry money is

23 blood money. Fur industry money exists thanks to the

24 people in this room paying other people to

25 deliberately hurt and tortured nonhuman animals just

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

275

2 like the pets we see walking the streets of New York  
3 City. Just like the Pats a lot of us in this room  
4 take care of and protect at home. Went to you by  
5 your families with the money paid off of this  
6 torture? Would you want your child to bring videos  
7 of anal electrocution to show and tell? What kind of  
8 world are we continuing to create for our children?  
9 How can we teach them that hurting a domesticated dog  
10 or cat is wrong and illegal and wearing the fur of  
11 another animal is beautiful and legal. One more  
12 thing. I'm sorry. In America, freedom of choice--

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

14 VANESSA SOLDANO: is questioned when there  
15 are victims involved.

16 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

17 VANESSA SOLDANO: I'm not the only person  
18 with these questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Thank  
20 you. Thank you all for testifying. And, again, I do  
21 not-- I am not trying to discourage anyone from  
22 coming back here again. I really value your time.  
23 Thank you for testifying. I do value your time.  
24 Feel free to come back to City Hall anytime.

25 [Laughter]

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: All right. Can I  
3 just get a show of hands who is here to testify in  
4 support of the bill? And who is here to testify  
5 against the bill? Okay. All right. Mark Goodman.  
6 Mark Goodman. Marvin Ngyen. Adrienne Lendau. Jen  
7 Othanos. Aurora James. Timothy O'Hara. Peter  
8 Avasis. Peter Liacos. Lauren Cabrolissa. Marcelo  
9 Zarniak. Gary Zeltser. Okay. All right. You can  
10 begin.

11 JEN OTHANOS: Hi. My name is Jen Othanos  
12 and my family has been in the fur business for over  
13 30 years and I have been full-time with them for the  
14 last three. Myself, my father-in-law, and my uncles  
15 depend on this business as our source of income to  
16 provide for our families. This is all they've ever  
17 done in, without this, I don't know how mortgages,  
18 rent, or bills will be paid. Passing this fur ban  
19 will rip the rents from under working-class people.  
20 My family is a family of immigrants. Immigrants who  
21 came here for the American dreams and, until now, I  
22 have been living it. Have been working hard to  
23 provide for this families and to send their children  
24 to school. They worked hard to provide for their  
25 families and continue to work hard to provide for

2 them. New York prides itself on being a sanctuary  
3 city for immigrants and immigrant families. What you  
4 are doing is threatening to rip away these Americans  
5 and these immigrants of their livelihood. The skills  
6 my family has are not transferable to other  
7 industries, despite what other people have said and  
8 it's disheartening that city Council members consider  
9 the jobs of these hard-working Americans as a small  
10 percentage of the city, implying that they don't  
11 matter, as the speaker showed in the video in the  
12 beginning. The poll stated, and previous testimonies  
13 were collected online. I had to show off for a year  
14 I work with how to use it over. So his voice was not  
15 heard in those online polls. He is also-- A lot of  
16 immigrants and a lot of people in the fur industry  
17 are green card holders, also peoples who voices are  
18 not heard to fight for their livelihoods. And it's  
19 disappointing as a New York City resident that only  
20 two Council members are still sitting here when we  
21 started with seven. My family matters. Our jobs  
22 matter and this is disrespectful and disheartening.  
23 Is there an-- Also, is there a human way-- a humane  
24 way to tell my 57-year-old coworker who just finished  
25 chemo treatment that he's out of a job and has to

2 start training in a new field? And then one last  
3 question. Is all red meat sold in New York City from  
4 cows whose skin is then repurposed for leather? Is  
5 that a bill in New York City? A mandate in New York  
6 City, that all-- right? So I just see that as very  
7 and extremely hypocritical.

8 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

9 PETER REVASIS: Council members, thank  
10 you for allowing me to speak today. My name is Peter  
11 Revasis and I'm a proud member of the-- and I am a  
12 proud member of the New York City fur industry. My  
13 father my grandfather brought me into the fur  
14 industry on Seventh Avenue and 30th Street 40 years  
15 ago and one of the ideals my father instilled in me  
16 is that all people are entitled to their beliefs and  
17 their opinions. I know that New Yorkers believe in  
18 free will, freethinking, and freedom of markets. The  
19 fur coat is just as much an expression of one's free  
20 will and individuality and taste as a diamond ring, a  
21 crocodile bag, or a cashmere coat. Why is the City  
22 Council considering forcing a ban on fur when I can  
23 say that no one here in this room is forcing anyone  
24 in this room to buy or wear fur coats. The free  
25 market will determine what products are bought and

2 sold. The market will become less free if the city  
3 Council bans the sale of fur. I asked the city  
4 Council to redirect their energies towards issues  
5 like poverty, education, crime, and transportation.  
6 I heard plenty of that beforehand today listening to  
7 you guys and some major stuff that you guys are  
8 working on and that's the way we feel you should  
9 direct your energies. I asked the city Council to  
10 please keep the market free and do not force a ban on  
11 fur in New York City. Thank you for listening.

12 PETER LIACOS: Thank you. Dear Council  
13 members, my name is Peter Liacos and I have been part  
14 of this industry for 48 years. My family history and  
15 the business date back hundreds of years in Greece.  
16 They came to America in the early 19 hundreds and  
17 continued the fur business in New York City. They  
18 became US citizens through hard work and long hours  
19 and supported their families and contributed to the  
20 community. In 2003, my eldest son Thomas finished  
21 his third year in medical rotation that graduate  
22 Hospital in Philadelphia shortly thereafter, he  
23 started feeling stomach cramps. My wife and I went  
24 down to the hospital to see what was going on. When  
25 the doctor came out to talk to us, we read his face.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 280

3 He told us he had stage IV stomach cancer through the  
4 tears and crying and asking the Lord for help,  
5 Thomas, what he had, he knew he would die in six  
6 months. Despite what my family was going through, I  
7 could not stay with my son as much as I wanted to.  
8 We had to make sacrifices because of the job. My  
9 wife and to stay with him and I had to get back to  
10 work and I had to continue the production in order to  
11 pay for the bills that, at that time, the cost of  
12 50,000 dollars a month of rent and salaries to keep  
13 going. My brother, who was a doctor got my son into  
14 slow New York City. Sloan treated my son Thomas with  
15 experimental drugs tested from animals and  
16 chemotherapy six months. He started feeling better,  
17 so he took his wife to be on a 10 day trip to Greece.  
18 But on June 12th, 2005, my son, Thomas Michael Liacos  
19 passed away 13 days before his 20 ninth birthday.  
20 Today, all I have is my family, all the workers who  
21 depend on me. They're all I have to keep going.  
22 I've been working full-time since 1971 and I'll  
23 proudly continue my family business--

24 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you, sir.

25 PETER LIACOS: The fur ban will cause  
my six workers to lose their jobs and shut down the

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

281

2 business. Without the fur market, these people would  
3 not be able to get jobs elsewhere. Fur is a unique  
4 factor in trained skills are nontransferable.

5 Please.

6 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you, sir.

7 PETER LIACOS: Think about the workers  
8 and think about families that would just be - drive  
9 and thank you for listening to me and God bless.

10 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

11 VICTORIA SUPORAS: That work is about  
12 family. Think about our families. It's a--

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: [interposing] We  
14 heard it. Thank you.

15 VICTORIA SUPORAS: [inaudible 05:23:56]

16 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: We heard his story.

17 VICTORIA SUPORAS: About the people.

18 About--

19 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

20 VICTORIA SUPORAS: About animals, too.

21 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I--

22 VICTORIA SUPORAS: [inaudible 05:24:00]

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [inaudible 05:24:01] You  
24 got a chance to speak. Sit down.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

282

2 GARY ZELTSER: Okay. I'll go. Good  
3 afternoon. My name is Gary Zeltser. I live in  
4 Brooklyn and Council member Chaim Deutsch is the  
5 Council men of my district. And I urged him to  
6 support the bill. I wanted to address them directly,  
7 but he is not here. He made a statement stating that  
8 his concern was this bill would increase the level of  
9 anti-Semitism against Jews that wear Shtreimels which  
10 is the customary fur hat that certain married Jewish  
11 men wear in the city. I wanted to be honest about  
12 that and say, if you are anti-Semitic, you are going  
13 to attack a Jew whether he has a hat on, baseball cap  
14 on, or no hat on. So, I don't think there should be  
15 any type of concern as far as anti-Semitism goes in  
16 regards to this band. The other statement I wanted  
17 to make was, if you ever googled men's vegan jackets,  
18 there is a lot of ugly jackets out there. There is a  
19 massive demand for, you know, cruelty free clothing  
20 out there outside, somebody asked me, what do you  
21 guys wear? Plastic? The answer is yes. The company  
22 is called Matt and Nat. They are highly successful  
23 and they make very fashionable clothing. So there is  
24 demand and, if people into this business, you know,  
25 with the vegan mindset in mind, I think you're going

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 222

3 to make a lot of money, as well. Because they are,  
4 again, a lot of us vegans, you know, we have good  
5 jobs. Right? We are ready to spend money on good  
6 products. The problem is, there really isn't that  
7 many products out there. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

9 MARK GOODMAN: Hi. My name Mark-- Hi.  
10 Ms. Mark Goodman and I just wanted to bring a little  
11 perspective here. It's a fact that, of all animals  
12 killed for human consumption, less than two percent  
13 are for furs. Less than two percent. All the rest  
14 are killed for food. That's right. 98 percent of  
15 the animals that are used by mankind are to eat. I  
16 don't believe banning of the sale of meat would be  
17 something that this Council would consider. So if  
18 Council can be a little self-reflective here, I think  
19 you might agree that this initiative is  
20 discriminatory and a little hypocritical. Or maybe a  
21 lot hypocritical. And will inflict severe hardships  
22 on a lot of hard-working families that have multi-  
23 generational businesses. The scope put them out of  
24 business and it has real, real consequences, as you  
25 can see. These are people who are, I don't know. So  
I--- I asked that you don't bow to the pressure of

3 well-financed lobby groups that have used aggressive  
4 tactics that, frankly, use a lot of misrepresentation  
5 and fake information. The amount of paying this  
6 would cause to hard-working families cannot be  
7 understated and, personally, I find it cruel and  
8 outrageous. Our country was founded on the fur trade  
9 and to ban it would be as un-American as giving up  
10 their freedom of choice or the pursuit of happiness.  
11 This is a pursuit of happiness issue. I think it's  
12 government overreach and it's a really bad idea and,  
13 lastly, I really got upset when Corey was conflating  
14 conservatism with this bill. There is nothing--  
15 There is no conservatism. It does not protect  
16 animals. It's not a good bill. Thank you. No fur  
17 ban please.

18 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. I'll  
19 Kirk Miller, Christina Detmer, Eva Didya, Maureen  
20 Medina. Kirk Miller, Christina Detmer, Eva Didya,  
21 Maureen Medina.

22 [Background comments]

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Christina Lou or  
24 Christina Vu. Heather Greenhouse. You may begin.

25 KIRK MILLER: My name is Kirk Miller  
and I live in central Harlem. My Council member is

2 Bill Perkins and I urge him to support the band to  
3 ban the sale of fur in New York City, Intro 1476.  
4 400 squirrels, 249 Erman, 200 chinchillas, 120  
5 muskrats, 80 Sable, 65 Mink, 50 Martins, 30 raccoons,  
6 22 Bobcats, 12 Lynx, or 5 Wolves. This is what it  
7 takes to make a single fur coat. What is a life  
8 worth? The trim on your coat? Nothing? Or  
9 everything? Millions of mostly wild animals are  
10 killed every year for their fur. Most are raised in  
11 tiny cages with deplorable conditions where disease,  
12 self-mutilation, and infanticide, and other psychotic  
13 behaviors are commonplace. Others are trapped in the  
14 wild in painful traps only to be electrocuted and  
15 skinned alive to preserve there for. Those who  
16 insist that the animals are not suffering are  
17 spreading boldfaced lies in the interest of making a  
18 profit. Today, there are no real laws protecting  
19 these animals. This is not a religious issue. This  
20 is not an ethnic issue. This is not even a partisan  
21 issue. As has been pointed out, the Mason Dixon poll  
22 shows that the 75 percent of New Yorkers who agree  
23 with this bill are evenly split between conservatives  
24 and liberals. This is an animal abuse issue. This  
25 is an environmental issue. Fur farms are huge

2 polluters, dumping raw feces into lakes and rivers  
3 along with formaldehyde, chromium, and cyanide based  
4 finishes. Thankfully, today way of quality and  
5 affordable alternatives to wearing for that involve  
6 little, if no suffering, and far less pollution. If  
7 we can prevent or diminish suffering and waste, then  
8 why not? If we can transition to more compassionate  
9 fashion, why wouldn't we? The bottom line is there  
10 is no excuse. Thank you.

11 CHRISTINA DETMER: My name is

12 Christina Detmer and I live on the Upper East Side in  
13 Council member Keith Powers' district and I urge him  
14 to support this bill. I have friends on both sides  
15 of the political aisle, including far left and far  
16 right. We have spirited, heated debates about a  
17 variety of controversial issues. This is not one of  
18 them because this is this one issue and I think one  
19 of the few issues I can say this about, we have  
20 complete unanimous blanket agreement that killing  
21 animals for fashion is wrong. Legislatures across  
22 the country are increasingly prioritizing the well-  
23 being of animals such as hot car laws, which we have  
24 all heard of, divorce and custody laws protecting the  
25 animal's best interest, and laws including animals in

2 domestic violence protection orders. Society is  
3 changing its view of animals and New York City should  
4 be at the forefront. We are blessed to live in one  
5 of the most free countries in the world, the United  
6 States. But even in the US, our freedom is not  
7 unlimited. The notion that we have unlimited rights  
8 to do whatever we want is absurd. Laws govern our  
9 behavior all the time. I can't drive 80 miles an  
10 hour on first Avenue or go to [inaudible 05:32:07]  
11 around the corner to buy opiates or DDT. Plus, the  
12 fear of going too far isn't a reason for not banning  
13 something that we agree is wrong. So we shouldn't  
14 band anything cruel just because of the fear of  
15 overstepping? Also, this bill does not prohibit the  
16 wearing of fur. You can wear fur every day of the  
17 year. You can wear fur to come and visit City Hall  
18 and I'm going to venture to guess that nobody is  
19 going to go into your closet to confiscate your fur  
20 items. But this bill is taking the stance that New  
21 York City will no longer be a party to this  
22 industry's exploitation of animals and no one even  
23 disputes that the fur industry exploits animals.  
24 Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 222

3 MAUREEN MEDINA: My name is Maureen

4 Medina and I live in Brooklyn. My Council member is

5 Carlos Menchaca. I am asking you to please support

6 intro 1476. I work in social services and help

7 veterans find housing and employment. I say this to

8 demonstrate that, yes, we do care about people, but

9 also to say that people, with the right resources and

10 opportunities, can adapt. They can improve their

11 situation and quality of life in spite of the

12 barriers and trauma they may have faced in life.

13 Animals are not that fortunate. Those opposing Intro

14 1476 of our concerned about their profit and self-

15 expression. There fashion statement and status and

16 their personal choice. But they are forgetting

17 someone. Rather, they are forgetting over 100

18 million victims that are abused and killed for their

19 fur every year. Their execution is planned the day

20 that they are born. It's simple. The only ones with

21 the right to for are the animals themselves. All of

22 us here at this point have learned about the horrors

23 that occur in the fur industry. When you consider

24 what is humane, please ask yourself, would you want

25 this done to you? Your loved ones? Or your pets at

home? What I have to say is only a reiteration of

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

200

2 what supporters of Intro 1476 have already expressed.  
3 Animals are not commodities. They are not products.  
4 Their bodies are their own and the fact that we use  
5 traps to capture them is indicative of how we force  
6 our personal choice on them. Traps and cages are  
7 inherently meant to hold someone against their will.  
8 Those opposing this ban are directly supporting and  
9 promoting violence and oppression. Freedom is never  
10 voluntarily given by the oppressor. It must be  
11 demanded by the oppressed and since the animals  
12 cannot speak for themselves, since their screams are  
13 drowned out by humane washing, we will speak up for  
14 them.

15 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

16 MAUREEN MEDINA: Please have compassion  
17 and support intro 1476. Thank you.

18 CHRISTINA LU: My name is Christina Lou  
19 and I live in Brooklyn. I am a constituent of  
20 Council member Brandon. As an animal lover, and  
21 someone who also works in social services, I am here  
22 today to ask the city Council to support intro 1476.  
23 Like the many people who stand before you in support  
24 of the ban, we can all agree that the fur industry  
25 is an outdated, cruel, blending, and murderous

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 an

3 industry that profits off the bodies of sentiment

4 animals. No animal should be forcibly bred and have

5 their life taken away from them all for the sake of a

6 fashion statement. The reality of fur farms is that

7 these animals live in deplorable conditions from the

8 beginning of their life to the very last moment they

9 are killed. There is nothing humane, ethical, or

10 sustainable about using fur. There is nothing

11 fashionable about an animal being scanned alive,

12 anally electrocuted, drowned, or caught in snare

13 traps. As you know, the fur industry is changing.

14 So many high-end designers like Burberry, Galliano,

15 Versace, have turned their backs against the fur

16 industry because they realize is the cruelty that

17 goes into making for. Many of these designers have

18 realized that fashion today should be socially and

19 environmentally responsible and have chosen affects

20 over cruelty. They are staring towards the future in

21 an industry that does not include the unnecessary

22 killing of an animal. We need to stop the cruelty.

23 We need to show empathy towards the suffering of

24 these animals in the industry. There is no reason in

25 2019, that as progressive New Yorkers, we are taking

a step backwards by wearing cruelty where cities like

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

201

2 LA and San Francisco have taken the advanced steps to  
3 ban the sale of fur. Those that oppose the ban are  
4 only concerned about money. They are only concerned  
5 that they will not be able to make a profit in an  
6 industry that kills and murders innocent animals.  
7 They are stuck in their old ways and refuse to  
8 acknowledge that new technology in fashion is  
9 creating others sustainable and alternative means to  
10 fur. My question for those who oppose the ban, could  
11 you explain to your children what happens to these  
12 animals that are used for fur? Would you show them  
13 the graphic videos of animals being killed? How many  
14 of your children would be appalled by what happens to  
15 these animals? As a society, people of lost their  
16 connection with most animals and can modify them.  
17 Animals are treated as mere objects and considered  
18 products. For those who have pets at home, do you  
19 consider--

20 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

21 CHRISTINA LU: your dog or cat as mere  
22 objects? Would you subject them to the conditions  
23 that the animals face on these farms?

24 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Thank  
25 you.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 202

3 HEATHER GREENHOUSE: Hi. My name is  
4 Heather Greenhouse and I'm on the board of voters for  
5 animal rights. I am going to address a couple of the  
6 outright lies the fur industry relies on to defend  
7 their brutal business. One such lie is that fur is  
8 sustainable. That is honestly laughable. It was  
9 ruled as false advertising by several European  
10 countries and they are prohibited from making that  
11 claim in many places. The truth is that fur is  
12 toxic and unnatural. To prevent the skin from  
13 rotting, they use toxic chemicals which are among the  
14 world's top five worst for toxic metal pollution.  
15 They pollute the air with greenhouse gases, water  
16 with ammonia and phosphorus, and rely almost entirely  
17 on fossil fuels. There is also nothing natural about  
18 forcibly breeding wild animals, confining them to  
19 bear in cages, and denying them every single natural  
20 and instinctual behavior before gruesomely murdering  
21 them through a knife or blade and all execution.  
22 Another popular mistruth they are spreading here in  
23 New York City is that this bill would cause severe  
24 job loss. This animal killing machine represents  
25 only 0.5 percent of fashion jobs in New York City and  
their skills are transferable to ethical materials.

2 Regardless, for is a bloodied, barbaric business that  
3 future generations will look back in horror and  
4 shame. All industries continuously evolve for  
5 ethical, environmental, and economic reasons and this  
6 is no different. They have a choice to move on with  
7 the times or remain in the dark ages. The grandiose  
8 claims of job loss are ridiculous when the real  
9 issues are ethics, morality, progress, and  
10 innovation. Animals are not objects, commodities,  
11 and their body parts are not products. The fur  
12 industry is on the wrong side of history and they  
13 know it. Only greed and profit drive them, but we  
14 have the truth and we are fighting for justice. The  
15 passing of Intro 1476 would represent a huge step in  
16 the right direction for New York City to show that we  
17 are as ethical and progressive as we claim to be.  
18 There is no right way to do the wrong thing. Thank  
19 you.

20 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Thank  
21 you all for testifying. We have Ryan Holt, Lester  
22 Wasserman, Nathan Semel, Meredith Shrevor, Rockwell  
23 Schwartz.

24 LEGAL COUNSEL: There's [inaudible  
25 05:40:12]

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 201

3 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Father John Vlahos.  
4 Riaz Bachs. Okay. You may begin. You may begin.

5 RYAN HOLT: Hi. My name is Ryan Holt. I  
6 represent the producers in North America of fur  
7 products through the Canadian and American producers.  
8 I think some of the things that need to be addressed  
9 are the fact that, in the United State itself, it's  
10 had a certification program in place since 1988. The  
11 Canadians have also had a similar process in place  
12 since 1990. These things have not been brought to  
13 any kind of a fruition in this process. The Fur Mark  
14 that they talk about is actually a conglomeration of  
15 these animal issues. Animal welfare issues that are  
16 being put together under an umbrella. That's why  
17 there seems to be some confusion about the why this  
18 layout has happened. The American system, North--  
19 the United States system itself has been adjusted 7  
20 times over the last 30 years that I've been involved  
21 with it to reflect both advances in animal science,  
22 as well as being able to adjust concerns brought on  
23 by public scrutiny. It is a very vibrant industry.  
24 It's a very well cared for industry, depending on  
25 your stance, it's either the second or third oldest  
occupation known to man. If you are a farmer, we

2 have a proud tradition of taking care of what we  
3 raise. Our animals that we raise. I have had  
4 several conversations with many people that have the  
5 same standards as I do that are actually in this room  
6 that are supporting this bill. The only difference  
7 is, when we get to the use of the product, that is  
8 where we separate our views. Our farming community  
9 as great respect for the animal. We are penalized  
10 for a need to factor any dirt or anything that  
11 happens to these animals. It makes absolutely no  
12 sense at all to take any shortcut. We have been  
13 certified by veterinarians up until the last few  
14 years until we have moved into this third-party  
15 objective inspection system. We have the utmost  
16 respect for this body and being able to have control  
17 over itself, but to be able to, I guess, compare all  
18 farmers to a few bad players would be similar to  
19 committing-- to comparing all government employees  
20 to what happens in Washington DC. I don't think any  
21 of us in here want to do that. But we just need to  
22 achieve balance. We need to understand that farmers  
23 do love their animals. Farmers do respect their  
24 animals and have nothing but the utmost care and it  
25 really boils down to a position of choice.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 296

3 ROCKWELL SCHWARTZ: Hi.

4 RYAN HOLT: Push that.

5 ROCKWELL SCHWARTZ: Thank you. Hi. My  
6 name is Rockwell Schwartz. And I'm here today with  
7 my dog biscuit and we live in your district, Chairman  
8 Espinal, we are here today to represent the millions  
9 of animals who cannot be here to testify on their own  
10 behalf. We are a city of animal lovers. There are  
11 over 1.1 million pets in New York City and over half  
12 as households have one or more pets. This is why,  
13 when people hear that biscuit was abandoned in a  
14 grocery store with no lower job and a broken front  
15 like, most people are horrified and this is why, for  
16 most New Yorkers, the thought of someone  
17 intentionally breaking biscuits like is condemnable.  
18 We understand his pain and fear. Yet, intentionally  
19 breaking animal's legs is standard practice in the  
20 fur industry. Likewise, the thought of electrocuting  
21 biscuit or guessing biscuit to death or in any way  
22 intentionally inflicting harm on him is a heinous  
23 thought. Yet these are all standard practices in the  
24 fur industry. Likewise, if you were to ask most New  
25 Yorkers if they would choose to kill biscuit in any  
way, even the most humane way, just so that they

2 could wear his fur, you would be hard-pressed to find  
3 a single person who isn't horrified by the thought.  
4 Yet, this is the foundation of the fur industry. The  
5 only difference, first violence is inflicted on  
6 animals who were out of sight and out of mind. Docs,  
7 just like biscuit, a broad, coyotes, foxes, minks, or  
8 rabbits domestically, each one feels just like  
9 biscuit does. H1 values his life just like biscuit  
10 values his. If we wouldn't sell biscuits for because  
11 he was born a dog, there is no justification to sell  
12 another animals for because they were born the wrong  
13 species. I will in today with two statistics. One,  
14 takes most mammals approximately three years to  
15 decompose after death. We prevent fur from  
16 decomposing by applying toxins that induce allergies,  
17 cancers, and hormonal imbalances in humans. Two,  
18 there are 51 members of the New York City Council.  
19 It takes approximately 50 dead animals to create just  
20 one fur coat. If those animals could testify before  
21 you and, again, this is a room full of humans, but if  
22 those animals could testify before you, we know what  
23 they would say. Please, we don't have to die.

24 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 200

3 MEREDITH SHRIVER: My name is Meredith

4 Shriver and I am a New York City resident in District

5 7. Fashion has come a long way in recent years. And

6 a growing number of designers realize the negative

7 impact the industry has had on animals and the

8 environment and are taking steps to repair that

9 damage. Luxurious eco-friendly and sustainable for

10 like fabric not only exists, but are nearly

11 indistinguishable from the skins of innocent animals.

12 That ability to ethically evolve, improve our

13 practices, and be environmentally considerate, while

14 causing the least amount of harm is the bedrock of a

15 civilized society and something for which we must

16 always strive. How could anyone justifiably condone

17 a practice that profits off the torture and death of

18 screaming animals, especially when cruelty free

19 alternatives readily exist? The clothing we wear can

20 make a statement without causing harm. Just ask

21 Versace, Gucci, Michael Kors, Armani, Tom Ford,

22 Stella McCartney, and the growing list of other

23 designers who have committed to for free fashion.

24 All these designers and the 75 percent of New Yorkers

25 who support this band know that for, whether a coat

or an accessory, comes from the bodies of innocent

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

200

2 animals who were barbarically killed. Killing a  
3 living being who does not want to be killed is, by  
4 definition, inhumane. Period. Many against this  
5 bill diver to the same argument. That no one has the  
6 right to push personal opinions on to anyone else.  
7 Where that logic falls apart, however, is when there  
8 are violent consequences like producing fur. I  
9 proudly joined Speaker Johnson, my councilperson,  
10 Mark Levine, and the other city Council members who  
11 support this bill. I stand with millions of animals  
12 callously murdered each year for a fashion statement  
13 who, aside from human greed and selfishness, could  
14 otherwise live full lives. For those opposed or  
15 undecided, I implore you to delve on line and see the  
16 atrocities of the fur trade. View the horrors for  
17 yourself. New York City should never stand for or  
18 condone such violence. They vote against this band  
19 is a vote for animal abuse and cruelty in New York is  
20 better than that.

21 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

22 NATHAN SEMEL: My name is Nathan Semel.

23 I understand the fear and uncertainty of the fur  
24 merchants of this room. I do. But to the Council, I  
25 say these three things. One, they had been on notice

2 for years. Animal rights legislation has  
3 proliferated. Just look at the circus bill passed by  
4 this very body two years ago. We have seen fur bans  
5 in LA, San Francisco, during London's fashion week,  
6 and others. Top designers in their business have  
7 been outspoken about the cruelty of fur declaring  
8 they will never use it again. So to be unprepared for  
9 this or, worse, unwilling to change, they really have  
10 nobody but themselves to blame. Two, stopping animal  
11 abuse is a moral obligation and, unlike in the past,  
12 high-quality alternatives exist so that image and  
13 ethics are not mutually exclusive. Three, before the  
14 fur ban, I never heard a single opponent dispute or  
15 utter a peep about the very impetus for this bill,  
16 animal cruelty. All I've heard is me me me. I am  
17 thankful to my Council member Mark Levine and the 75  
18 percent of New Yorkers who support this bill because  
19 it is right. It is about compassion. It's not about  
20 money, politics, or tradition, which should never be  
21 a reason to continue to do something unethical.  
22 Councilmembers have a choice. Protect the mink with  
23 an electric rod jammed into her rectum or the mink  
24 merchant who has refused to even try cruelty free  
25 alternatives. Protect the mother coyote trapped for

2 days in a steel like clamp. Or the Canada Goose  
3 Corporation trying to convince a generation that  
4 social status and projecting wealth is what's most  
5 important. Protect the baby Fox who has every inch  
6 of her skin peeled from her still living body or the  
7 shop lying to its customers about it being ethically  
8 sourced. Protect to the rabbits jammed in the cages  
9 for their entire miserable lives or the souvenir  
10 shops selling them as pom-poms on a hat or a keychain  
11 accessory. Protecting the profiteers over the abused  
12 would be contrary to the compassionate and  
13 progressive trend that is the hallmark of this body.

14 MITCHELL ADELMAN: My name is Mitchell  
15 Adelman and I am the global Vice President of Dennis  
16 Basso and J. Mendel stores which employ over 40  
17 people on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. I come  
18 before you to ask a question which is bigger than the  
19 fur issue. It's the issue of freedom of choice. As  
20 one key man to another, Mr. Johnson, how would you  
21 feel if we were here today voting to ban gay rights?  
22 Living in America gives us the choice to choose  
23 whether or not to wear fur. It is the essential,  
24 fundamental American right to choose. For someone  
25 who has spent the last 40 years in the fur business,

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

202

2 which is provided my partner and I are wonderful  
3 life, I find it absurd that I am standing here today  
4 fighting for the right to ask the board not to band  
5 for sales in New York City. I believe we should not  
6 be wasting taxpayer money and time on an issue that  
7 most New Yorkers would find baffling to take away  
8 their civil liberty, their right to choose. As a man  
9 who lives in the greater city of New York my whole  
10 adult life. I see the hardships of my fellow New  
11 Yorkers are faced with every day. We should be  
12 voting to help the homeless. Helping the veterans  
13 who fight for this country and are able to steady  
14 income. Our education system is and have Eric. Most  
15 of the younger generation is fighting to have a  
16 decent education. The lack of funding for public  
17 service is devastating, which is why I do not  
18 understand why for banning is a current top priority.  
19 Mr. Johnson, to me, my friends, clients and  
20 colleagues, we all believe that this seems like a way  
21 for you to make a name for yourself. Please make  
22 time to help improve New York City, which you have  
23 been elected to do so. Stop taking away people's  
24 rights to make their own choices whether to wear for  
25 her or not. Respectfully yours, Mitchell Adelman.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

202

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Thank  
3 you for testifying. It's 7:05 p.m. Just for some  
4 housekeeping, how many of you are planning on  
5 testifying? Can you please raise your hand? Okay.  
6 All right. I'm going to take a five-minute break and  
7 will come back. Again, we're going to take a five  
8 minute break. If you have testimony and you rather  
9 just drop it off, it will be treated just the same as  
10 if you are reading it. You can also email it to the  
11 Speaker's office and you have until Monday to do  
12 that. We're going to take a five minute break.  
13 Thanks.

14 [Gavel] [Background comments]

15 [Gavel]

16 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: All right. We're  
17 reconvening. I want to call up the next panel. We  
18 have Lester Wasserman, Florence Anthony, Richard Tax,  
19 Ryan Holt, Eric Dingman.

20 [Background comments]

21 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Lester Wasserman,  
22 Florence Anthony, Richard Tax, Ryan Holt.

23 LEGAL COUNSEL: Oh. I think we called  
24 already. I'm sorry.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

201

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Erica Dingman. We  
3 haven't. We haven't.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: We haven't? Okay. All  
5 right. And then you can call a few of these.

6 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Okay. Ramon  
7 Contreras. Stamatis Lilicacus. Allan Tax. Laura  
8 Taylor. Okay. Let's begin.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet. Quiet.

10 STEPHEN LACACIS: Hi. Good evening.  
11 Thank you for your patience today and this evening.  
12 My name is Stephen Lacacis. I work at American Fur  
13 Center here in New York City. If the second  
14 generation for company. And I've got to tell you  
15 there's a few things-- I had a speech prepared for  
16 today, but I'm going to just go off speech  
17 altogether. The hypocrisy that is in this room  
18 today, it's unbelievable. We are being called cruel  
19 by an organization that actually kills puppies and  
20 kittens and throws their dead bodies into dumpsters.  
21 We are being called immoral by an organization that  
22 was in this room today touting how they shut down the  
23 circus industry when three weeks ago they lost a  
24 court case for staging videos. What's amazing to me  
25 is how this organization infiltrates the circuits,

2 abuses and animal, and pins that on another industry  
3 and it is perfectly legal. Then we have another guy  
4 that comes into this chamber with a steel like trap,  
5 which is actually illegal in most states. The  
6 hypocrisy is amazing. And then you hear about  
7 designers who are out of fur and, yeah, all lot of  
8 them pulled out. They pulled down of a certain type  
9 of fur. They didn't pull out of the fur industry.  
10 When you pull up the meaning of fur, it's a  
11 furbearing animal. It doesn't matter-- And I agree  
12 with you guys on some stuff. It's leather. It's  
13 Wade. It's anything that has hair on it. And if you  
14 are going to make a ban in New York City, you should  
15 ban everything. Not just a particular type of fur  
16 because they are all furbearing. Now, if you want to  
17 ban fur, ban meat. Ban dairy. Ban poultry. Ban  
18 eggs. This is the end result of what they are  
19 looking for. So if you are going to cave in to a  
20 small minority group that is going to come into this  
21 chamber and try to impose their will on us, then go  
22 all the way. And just one more thing that I want to  
23 say.

24 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

206

2 STEPHEN LACACIS: Okay. Thank you very  
3 much.

4 UNIDENTIFIED: This hearing wants to  
5 make me cry. Not because of the animal extremists.  
6 Corey Johnson comes in here to push his agenda,  
7 grandstanding for two hours, gets up and leaves after  
8 he is done talking. What about listening to his  
9 constituents? I am not proud to be a long-term New  
10 York Democrat. Speaker Johnson mentions this week  
11 leather will not be banned as the animal is not  
12 eaten. You mention in this hearing it's okay to kill  
13 animals to eat. Shit. Where did my other piece of  
14 paper go? Okay. I'm just going to have to wing it,  
15 then. I'm here to talk that many fur animals are  
16 eaten. That hasn't been discussed here yet. Rabbits  
17 are eaten. Afghan lamb is eaten from Afghanistan.  
18 Chinese raccoons are eaten. Chinese mink are eat-in.  
19 American raccoons are eaten. All of these animals  
20 are eat-in that are fur animals. This is not been  
21 talked about. Okay. And they are on the ban. There  
22 are many other leather animals that are not on the  
23 ban that PETA states-- I lost my quote. That they  
24 are killed only for their skins. Including ostrich,  
25 snakes, alligators, etc. and they are not eaten on

2 PETA's ban. So why are our animals that are eaten on  
3 the ban and their animals that are not eaten, they  
4 are allowed.

5 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

6 UNIDENTIFIED: Additionally, UGGS, who  
7 is trying to get out of this and get an exception  
8 because they say they are leather, it's not actually  
9 true. There is a quote from UGGS in their own  
10 website that says the animal is primarily not used--  
11 is eaten, but it's not all.

12 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

13 UNIDENTIFIED: This needs to be  
14 discussed.

15 RAMON CONTRERAS: I would start with good  
16 afternoon, but it is evening now, so good evening and  
17 thank you to the committee for the opportunity to  
18 speak before you regarding the proposed ban on the  
19 sale of fur apparel in New York City, Intro 1476. I  
20 am here to ask you not to waste our time and  
21 resources on fur, but instead focus on what really  
22 matters, keeping our communities safe. My name is  
23 Ramon Contreras and I am the cofounder of Youth Over  
24 Guns. Youth Over Guns was formed in the aftermath of  
25 the Parkland shooting amid the national outcry for

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

209

2 gun violence prevention solutions. We demand that  
3 leaders and other stakeholders invest resources into  
4 local grassroots gun violence prevention  
5 organizations that work towards reducing gun violence  
6 in communities of color. Our founding members  
7 include high school and college students from across  
8 the city who want to be safe from gun violence at  
9 school and in their communities. In November 2018,  
10 we partnered up with New Yorkers against gun violence  
11 and, in June 2018, Youth Over Guns marched across the  
12 Brooklyn Bridge. As 10,000 people, we carried a  
13 casket to symbolize the deaths in our community. We  
14 marched to demand evidence-based safety measures in  
15 our schools and in our communities that are more  
16 respected than policing, prosecution, and  
17 incarceration. We also march because deaths and  
18 injuries in communities of color are barely given a  
19 second of any mainstream media outlet. Today, the  
20 city Council is examining whether to permit the sale  
21 of fur apparel in New York City, yet, in downtown  
22 Manhattan, it is still legal to purchase guns and  
23 ammunition and, while the New York City task force--  
24 and, all the while, the New York City Council task  
25 force to combat gun violence is listed as an active

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

200

2 on the city Council's website. It both shocks and  
3 saddens me that we are refusing to take action on the  
4 most serious challenge facing our city: gun violence.  
5 If our leaders want to strive to make New York City a  
6 true city upon the hill, and if we're focused on  
7 setting an example across the country as a truly  
8 progressive city, than why not ban guns and tackle  
9 the 30 percent increase in homicides across our city?  
10 It disgusts me to see what we are hiding from. That  
11 we are hiding from the issues of serious importance.  
12 A fur ban is historically discriminatory and a tactic  
13 to distract us from the real issues at hand. Let's  
14 prioritize what matters to our communities and make  
15 sure true progressive values are at the forefront of  
16 the party. Thank you.

17 LAURA TAYLOR: Good evening. I'm Laura  
18 Taylor. I'm visiting from Akron, New York which is a  
19 rural community outside of Buffalo. I am a Suni  
20 fashion business instructor and a PhD student at Iowa  
21 State University studying fashion sustainability. My  
22 research focus is on pre and post-consumer textile  
23 waste. I hope the committee finds my testimony  
24 helpful in deciding on this multi-faceted issue. In  
25 2015, the textile industry generated 16.03 million

2 tons of waste. Out of that waste, only 15.3 percent  
3 was recycled and 10.53 million tons landed in  
4 landfills. That's EPA 2018 report. The fashion  
5 industry generates tremendous pre-consumer and post-  
6 consumer fabric waste each year which negatively  
7 impacts the environment. At the pre-consumer level,  
8 fur manufacturers use cutting and sewing practices  
9 that minimize waste. These practices developed over  
10 time as a result of the high value of fur and the  
11 economic benefits of using the entire fur. The value  
12 of faux fur is significantly less as synthetic  
13 acrylic is inexpensive to produce. Less emphasis is  
14 given to zero waste cutting and manufacturing  
15 techniques in the production of faux fur. This  
16 produces higher waste at the pre-consumer level. At  
17 the post-consumer level, real fur, there-- the life  
18 of the garment is extended because it is typically  
19 passed down where faux fur is typically thrown away.  
20 At the disposal level, synthetic textile waste is  
21 hard to be safely burned due to it's chemical  
22 composition and it's difficult to be buried in  
23 landfills because of it's slow decomposition rate.  
24 Faux fur in landfills increase synthetic fiber  
25 particles in our soil and water. In contrast,

2 natural furs decompose. Today we've hear that  
3 enforcing this ban could hurt humans and not  
4 enforcing this ban could hurt animals and I'm  
5 suggesting that, because of the lack of decomposition  
6 of synthetic particles that having a ban on fur that  
7 does not also address the economic, environmental,  
8 and societal aspects of synthetic fur--

9 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

10 LAURA TAYLOR: is bad for both.

11 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Got it.

12 RICHARD TAX: Hello. My name is Richard Tax  
13 and I am here with my son, Christopher. I'm a  
14 fourth-generation furrier. Chris is hoping to follow  
15 me in the family business. We employ people, pay  
16 rent, and pay our city taxes. This is actually a  
17 very simple matter. This is a matter of choice. If  
18 you don't like fur, don't buy it. Protest it. That  
19 is your right. That is the right given by America.  
20 They should not be a governmental issue at all. Make  
21 no mistake. These people are coming to take away  
22 your fur, leather, down, fish, meat, milk, eggs.  
23 Yes. Your New York pizza. Someone mentioned that  
24 today. Your right to fish and hunt. And, yes.  
25 Animal medical research that has saved tens of

2 millions of people. They admit this. They had been  
3 applauding it all day long. Okay. The argument that  
4 other cities are banning furs and that some designers  
5 are using it is not a valid argument. This is just  
6 like saying to your mother, well, my friend did it,  
7 so so can I. Okay. This is called personal liberty  
8 and freedom of choice which is the basis of our great  
9 nation and the talk of workers transitioning to other  
10 jobs and the city taking care of them is a farce.  
11 They will be completely forgotten by the city and the  
12 designers if this ban passes. To think otherwise is  
13 completely naïve. Okay. I certain do not believe  
14 that 75 percent of new Yorkers support this ban. I  
15 would like to see the questions asked and the  
16 conditions that the poll was conducted. I assume it  
17 was funded by the anti-fur people. The animal  
18 extremists have equated furs to slavery many times  
19 today. Those are the type of people pushing this  
20 ban. Choice. Choice. Choice. While I still have a  
21 choice, I am taking my son out for a nice bloody  
22 steak now which-- we'll get a thumbs down from  
23 everyone else here, but until the government decides  
24 to legislate against that, I am able to. Council  
25 member, I would gladly like you ready my shirt.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

212

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: You have to read--  
3 You have to sit down and you can't approach the desk.  
4 And speak to the microphone.

5 [Background comments]

6 RICHARD TAX: Can you read it?

7 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Yeah. I've got 20-  
8 20 vision. I can see.

9 RICHARD TAX: This is a quote by Thomas  
10 Jefferson.

11 [Background comments]

12 RICHARD TAX: Can you read it?

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Yeah. Yeah. I got  
14 it.

15 [Background comments]

16 RICHARD TAX: Can you read it for the  
17 record?

18 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I think your time  
19 is up. But that--

20 [Laughter]

21 RICHARD TAX: Can you please read it for  
22 the record?

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: You can read it on  
24 the microphone.

25 RICHARD TAX: Okay.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

214

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I'm not here to  
3 read your shirt, man.

4 RICHARD TAX: A government big enough--  
5 [Laughter]

6 RICHARD TAX: A government big enough to  
7 take away everything you want is strong enough to  
8 take everything that you have. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Thank  
10 you.

11 LEGAL COUNSEL: I don't know which side  
12 is scarier.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [inaudible 06:10:48] we  
14 kick you out now.

15 [Background comments]

16 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: All right. Up next  
17 we have Praticshia Patel.

18 LEGAL COUNSEL: Patel.

19 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Patel?

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: Yeah.

21 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Patel. Praticshia  
22 Patel. Sylvia Hyzal. Farrah Salmon. Meredith  
23 Shriver. Nathan Semel.

24 [Background comments]

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

215

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thanks. Let me see  
3 that.

4 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Irene Gaudy.  
5 Rockwell Schwartz.

6 [Background comments]

7 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: John de Leonard.

8 [Background comments]

9 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Stephen Walsh.

10 Chris Tapp. Leah Amanatitis. Corey Bea. Mac  
11 Schmidt. Nicole Damon. Maryanne Presad. Christen  
12 Berger. Kaitlyn Saffaryte. Rachel Eisment. Sherrie  
13 Ramsey.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet. Shhh--

15 [Background comments]

16 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Theresa Russo.  
17 Andrea Katz. Blair Marshall.

18 BLAIR MARSHALL: Here.

19 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: You can begin.

20 NICOLE DAMON: Okay. So I cut mine  
21 pretty short, but I submitted it to you guys--

22 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Yeah.

23 NICOLE DAMON: [inaudible 06:12:36]. I  
24 just want to say my name is Nicole Damon and a 10  
25 year resident of Williamsburg, Brooklyn. So city

2 Council member Antonio Reynoso is my district Council  
3 member. Basically, when I was a kid, my aunt said to  
4 me that animals were a test of our character. She  
5 said that we must treat them with kindness and not  
6 because they have rights, but really because they  
7 don't because they are completely and totally at our  
8 mercy. So, some people argue that wearing fur is a  
9 personal choice, but this is not considerate of the  
10 animals whose life had value to them. In the name of  
11 fashion, we have condemned them to a life of  
12 confinement, monetized their bodies, and then labeled  
13 then do no dry-clean. No one-- I don't think anyone  
14 would like this to happen to this cat or dog, so just  
15 because we have always done something doesn't make it  
16 right and, certainly, no tradition where-- excuse  
17 me. I'm very nervous. Where cruelty is inherent is  
18 one worth keeping. That's all I'd like to say.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

21 PRATEKSHA PATEL: Good evening. My name  
22 is Prateksha Patel. I live in Brooklyn. I am a  
23 small business owner, veterinarian, and copresident  
24 of the PT of PS 32, my children's school. My  
25 councilman is Carlos Menchaca. Thank you for the

2 opportunity to let me speak in support of the fur  
3 ban, Intro 1476. I have included animals in my  
4 circle of care and compassion from a very young age.  
5 As a graduate of Perdue University veterinary school  
6 in 2005, I wholeheartedly accepted a professional of  
7 to protect and do no harm. In 2010, I joined the  
8 National Disaster Medical system, serving the United  
9 States as a veterinary medical officer to widen my  
10 circle of care and compassion to include strays and  
11 farm animals caught in disasters. My role also  
12 includes caring for canine working dogs. I am here  
13 today to broaden my circle once again. I consult on  
14 cruelty investigations, interpreting body posture,  
15 eye and ear positioning, and other cues to educate my  
16 audience on the stress and inhumanity of confined  
17 living conditions. I have reviewed the Fur  
18 Commission USA site and is seen the cages and  
19 seemingly endless rows across many buildings. Per  
20 #it, in the US alone, 3 million Mink were caged in  
21 2017. Though the site claims that these animals are  
22 domesticated in use to living in cages, living in a  
23 cage itself is a form of torture. Nothing thrives in  
24 a cage. I understand some of you may think about  
25 this issue through its economic impact. I to stop

2 and think about my neighbors and others in this  
3 industry. I think about their livelihoods and have  
4 care and compassion for them. But I know that, given  
5 all of my experiences so far, that banning the sale  
6 of for in New York City is the right thing to do for  
7 the animals and for the people who kill, cage, and  
8 skin them. Constant exposure to violence can be  
9 traumatizing. It's an injustice to the laborer who  
10 earns their living by locking cages and sharpening  
11 knives for their fellow humans. There is no glamour  
12 in this industry.

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

14 BLAIR MARSHALL: Good evening. My name  
15 is Blair Marshall. I live in Queens and my  
16 councilman is Peter Koo. Historically in this  
17 country, the most vulnerable of been overlooked and  
18 made use of, but we have seen the truth and amended  
19 our laws. Animal rights is one of the next  
20 frontiers. Animals are uniquely unprotected. They  
21 have no voice in the legislative process. We are  
22 their voice and we must be their voice. It is so  
23 important to remember defenseless animals are utterly  
24 dependent on us humans to be ethical and to not  
25 exploit them. To quote from the beloved children's

2 book, black beauty, we call them dumb animals and so  
3 they are for they cannot tell us how they feel, but  
4 they do not suffer less because they have no words.  
5 We must listen to their pain. We must pass this  
6 bill. Thank you.

7                   STEPHEN WALSH: Hello. My name is  
8 Stephen Walsh and I live in nearby Long Island and I  
9 strongly support Bill 1476 A two banned the sale of  
10 for in New York because fur production is cruel to  
11 animals, unnecessary, and environmentally  
12 unsustainable. Each year, the fur industry kills  
13 millions of animals while they're still alive,  
14 subjecting them to electrocution, poisoning,  
15 gussing, or neck breaking. Over the years, many  
16 fashion designers have stopped using real fur after  
17 realizing the intents cruelty and suffering animals  
18 have to endure. It is 2019 and people are now in  
19 favor of fake fur and other cruelty free  
20 alternatives. Those who argue against the fur ban  
21 are selfish. Money centric capitalists who do not  
22 care about the animals. Freedom of choice should not  
23 apply as long as there are victims within these evil  
24 industries. The majority of New Yorkers, from what I  
25 have read, upwards of 75 percent support of ban on

2 for. As a progressive and compassionate state, we  
3 should align our actions with our beliefs and vote  
4 yes to ban fur. I urge New York to support this  
5 bill. Thank you.

6           SHERRIE RAMSEY: Good evening. My name  
7 is Sherrie Ramsey and I am testifying of the Policy  
8 Advisor on legislation on animal cruelty for the  
9 Voters for Animal Rights. I'm a New York City  
10 resident and I live in Helen Rosenthal's district.  
11 I'm also a licensed attorney in New York, New Jersey,  
12 and Virginia and have also served as an adjunct  
13 professor teaching animal law here in New York at New  
14 York Law School and CUNY Law School. I support bill  
15 Intro 1476. When I teach animal law to the students  
16 in my class, I spend a lot of time talking to them  
17 about animal cruelty. I take time to go over all the  
18 laws and I am very proud that New York is the first  
19 state to have enacted animal cruelty laws around the  
20 country and many states model the laws. And I talked  
21 to them about some of the cases that I have  
22 personally either prosecuted or helped prosecute of  
23 animal cruelty and explained to them how our laws are  
24 enacted to protect animals. But, inevitably, when we  
25 get to the part of the text where we talk about for

2 and I show them the videos, undoubtedly, the students  
3 start to raise their hands and ask a how this  
4 horrible treatment of animals could be legal under  
5 our laws. The students get very upset when I show  
6 them videos like we saw today. And also some are  
7 even left to tears. They cannot understand how this  
8 conduct could still be legal in our country. They  
9 remind me that I just told them that, in most states  
10 in this country gassing animals is illegal. Why?  
11 Because it's considered horribly cruel. It's a  
12 terrible way to die. And so, they can't understand  
13 why, if it's illegal in both states to gas animals in  
14 shelters, why is it legal to do it to animals here?  
15 How could we possibly consciously anally electrocuting  
16 animals? And I explained to them that's because the  
17 pelt is the only thing that matters. And they can't  
18 understand that. So sadly I'm sort of unable to  
19 answer their inevitable questions on how this  
20 nameless cruelty can still be legal. So I urge you  
21 to support this bill so that I can tell my next class  
22 that this cruelty is in fact illegal.

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

24 SHERRIE RAMSEY: At least in New York.

25 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 222

3 [Background comments]

4 RACHEL EDGEMONT: Hi. Good evening

5 everyone. I'd like to start off by saying my name is

6 Rachel Edgemont and I reside in Bellerose, Queens New

7 York and my district council member is Barry

8 Grodenchik. I'm here today like everybody else on

9 our team here to ask you to please support Intro 1476

10 to ban fur in New York City. I believe it's high

11 time for elected officials to discuss the issue of

12 current interest. Namely, the very urgent problem of

13 animal abuse. Every day we hear about organizations

14 and industries moving away from conducting and using

15 animals for scientific research. And/or for profit.

16 It is not surprising that mass media helps with the

17 spread of alternative normative policies that prove

18 how important animal protection is. But your animal

19 cruelty laws are not enough for the protection of

20 these animals. Therefore, many feel they can get

21 away with the infringement of such laws and continue

22 their path of abuse against the innocent segment of

23 society. One who are and will always be dependent on

24 our protection. I lived a life of privilege. As

25 such, for most of my adult life I have worn furs and

skins of animals. On one day I realized that this

2 privileged life I was leaving felt incongruous and  
3 incompatible with the culture of humanity and  
4 morality that I thought was inherent to civilized  
5 life. Treating animals should orient towards only--  
6 not only animal laws, but all our own moral norms.  
7 Animal protection should be a priority for every  
8 self-respecting human being. Finally, I need to  
9 express to you that there is no need to be cruel to  
10 animals to stay warm or to look glamorous. Or to  
11 even combat malnutrition. If you choose to set aside  
12 this matter, you will have only shifted the animal  
13 cruelty discourse central to the US national story.

14 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

15 RACHEL EDGEMONT: And you will responsible  
16 putting--

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

18 RACHEL EDGEMONT: humanitarians against  
19 nonhumanitarians and when these policies are being  
20 debated in your legislators, which side will you be  
21 on?

22 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

23 RACHEL EDGEMONT: Thank you very much.

24 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Next panel we have  
25 Jeffrey Peters, Jeffrey Getters, Charles Nucleus or

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

224

2 Neoclos. Kim Salvo or Kim Salvio. Stacie Lippan.

3 Samantha Ortiz. I'm not sure what this is.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Maybe just go for--

5 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Yeah.

6 LEGAL COUNSEL: If there's a--

7 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Terry Gravy from  
8 Fur NYC. Terry Granny.

9 LEGAL COUNSEL: Okay. This is the rest  
10 of those.

11 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Okay. Demetri  
12 Philipides. Thomas Laks. Aleena Goikman. Ritalin  
13 Foreman. Eddie-- Eddry Wan.

14 LEGAL COUNSEL: Okay. Here's the rest.

15 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: You can begin.

16 UNIDENTIFIED: I want to think the  
17 counsel for the opportunity to set before them and  
18 discuss the matter. I would also like to thank  
19 everybody who is here today for sharing their views.  
20 Whether-- no matter which side you are on. Both  
21 sides needed to be heard. I happen to be a vegan.  
22 Not a vegan. I happen to be a person who has a vegan  
23 diet. I've been in the fur business for 35 years and  
24 one I am seeing today is I'm hearing to valid sides.  
25 New York has always been a leader in the world in

2 policy and leading the way. I think that what all of  
3 us need to do is look at ourselves in the mirror.  
4 Think about both science and our councilperson, Corey  
5 Johnson, said something earlier. He said if we could  
6 find a way to work this out, we should. I think that  
7 that's what's needs to be thought about. I would  
8 like the council to consider that. I know furriers  
9 for a long, long time and I don't know any furrier  
10 who wouldn't be-- or who would have an objection to  
11 working things out. So I would like to the council  
12 to consider that. But again, no furrier is, that I  
13 know of, and I've been in the business for a long  
14 period of time and we talked behind the scenes. No  
15 furrier that I know of has ever thought about being  
16 cruel to animals and that is not their agenda. And  
17 lastly I'd like to say is we all need to look  
18 ourselves in the mirror again. When you point the  
19 finger at somebody else, you're pointing three back  
20 at yourself. I've seen a lot of anger on both sides  
21 today, again, this is not the United States that I  
22 know of. This is not the country that I know of and  
23 we need to consider getting together and working this  
24 out. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

226

2 ALEENA GOIKMAN: Hello. My name is  
3 Aleena Goikman and I wanted to say thank you for the  
4 opportunity to testify that day. I will be  
5 testifying on behalf of Ivel (sp?) international, a  
6 family-owned business that was started by immigrants.  
7 My father has been working in this industry his  
8 entire life and continue to do so when he immigrated  
9 here as a refugee. He has dedicated his entire life  
10 by investing in this industry with his hard work.  
11 Six days a week from 5 AM to 5 PM. This band will  
12 cause him to lose his company, Ivel International and  
13 he will no longer be able to support our family. His  
14 employees, who are over 50 years old, would lose  
15 their jobs and would not be able to find the engines.  
16 And, in effect, not be able to support their  
17 families. His business, as well as hundreds of  
18 others, will immediately go bankrupt and cause  
19 financial loss to so many people. Please don't take  
20 our freedom away. After all, this government is for  
21 the fiscal and, therefore, should respect people's  
22 choices in their lives. This is an emotional,  
23 personal, and economical decision that will impact  
24 many lives. Many family-owned businesses in the fur  
25 industries will cease to exist in New York City.

2 Families will suffer immensely because of the  
3 financial loss that would directly affect them. The  
4 critical concern of all the people who testified  
5 today is to support their families. As a child of an  
6 immigrant family who came to this country because of  
7 all the freedom and opportunity it offered, the  
8 decision of the fur ban would suppress our freedom of  
9 choice and, in effect, a financial burden on my  
10 future as I study in college. As the first for an  
11 American, I value and cherish my country and hope  
12 that the decision will not limit my opportunity to  
13 succeed. Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

15 EDDIE WAN: My name is Eddie Wan. I am  
16 living in Queens and I am a 30 years old-- mean, 30  
17 years in for business between Hong Kong and USA and I  
18 am an American Chinese in a family of four. And I  
19 would lose my job in many American and Asian related  
20 person making a living in the fur industry between  
21 USA, Canada, and Hong Kong would lose their jobs.  
22 And now I don't understand because how animals  
23 support the human living, we worry about animals but  
24 not furrier child? I came to America because it's a  
25 country and freedom of choice, not to tell me not and

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 229

2 we can wear. Humans eat beef and chicken, then where  
3 [inaudible 06:29:20] get their meat and food come  
4 from? Many American Asian and especially love to  
5 wear for. I have emails of my friends and family and  
6 business acquaintances and sign the petition, for  
7 pages to 80 to [inaudible 06:29:38] the legislation  
8 director against fur ban. Please stop the fur ban.  
9 And more humans to put resource in gun ban. Not fur  
10 ban. Stop the fur ban. Thank you.

11 RHEA LYNN FOREMAN: My name is Rhea  
12 Lynn Foreman and I am here today to speak on behalf  
13 of the Humane Education Committee of the United  
14 Federation of Teachers. We worked with hundreds of  
15 teachers throughout the city to turn key humane  
16 education into their classrooms and teach our youth  
17 to demonstrate empathy, compassion, and kindness  
18 towards people, animals, and the environment we  
19 share. Today, we have an opportunity to come  
20 together as global citizens and ban the unimaginably  
21 cruel act of the industrial scale killing of animals  
22 for their skin. Animals suffer immense pain and  
23 torture for humans to wear them. These innocent  
24 animals endure horrors that we would not wish on her  
25 worst enemies simply because people like the way

2 their coat looks and feels. Luckily, technological  
3 and other nations have already provided us with so  
4 many alternatives to further that are cruelty free.  
5 I'm skipping a lot because a lot of it has been said  
6 and time is so limited. Humane education--  
7 educators work hard to teach our youth to be caring  
8 and considerate of all sentient beings. How could we  
9 do this effectively when our laws support industries  
10 that ask you to dampen their empathy and the  
11 consumers of harmful products like those offered by  
12 the fur industry? Our laws must model the values  
13 that we want our youth to emulate. Help us follow  
14 the state mandate of humane education laws and  
15 support the end of cruel practices by supporting  
16 Intro bill 1476 and a just, sustainable, equitable  
17 future for all animals. Humans included.

18 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. Thank  
19 you all. Thanks for testifying. We have Jill Lori.  
20 Sherit Shmalevitz. Frederica Miller or Mueller.  
21 Catherine Casey. Margaret Lee. Joyce Friedman.

22 [Background comments]

23 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Yuki Endo.  
24 Mitchell Adelman.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

220

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: All right.

3 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Dolores Ferraro.

4 Dolores Ferraro.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: She left.

6 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Okay. Yeah. We  
7 may begin.

8 JILL LAURIE: Hello. My name is Jill  
9 Laurie. I am a licensed clinical social worker.  
10 Today I am here as the voice of the animals. Thank  
11 you councilmembers for holding this public forum  
12 where the cries of the animals can be heard. Those  
13 of us who have been fortunate enough to have  
14 relationships with animals know that they experience  
15 pain just as we do. We also understand their  
16 capacity to love and offer us unconditional love.  
17 With that comes a moral responsibility on our part to  
18 protect and illuminate practices that cause them pain  
19 and suffering. In the case of fur used in clothing,  
20 this cruelty is perpetrated for reasons of fear,  
21 greed, vanity, and ignorance. The brutality that we  
22 as a society inflict on animals has repercussions  
23 beyond the pain of the animals. We are all  
24 interconnected. Human and nonhuman animals. Just as  
25 when you tossed a pebble into a body of water it is

2 ripple effects throughout, so does our cruelty  
3 towards animals boomerang back to us. Our  
4 desensitization to the suffering of other living  
5 beings perpetrates violence and compromises the  
6 fabric of our society. We know in our hearts and  
7 souls that no good can come from it. Rather than a  
8 choice between humans and animals, this is the choice  
9 between love and fear. So, Council members, I ask  
10 that as you review today's testimonies, you be  
11 compassionate enough to listen and hear the pain and  
12 suffering of the animals, wise enough to see the big  
13 picture of what condoning barbaric practices towards  
14 animals creates for all of us, humble enough to admit  
15 that we have been wrong for tolerating the abuse of  
16 animals, and courageous enough to act to remedy this  
17 injustice and pass Intro 1476 A into law. Thank you.

18 CATHERINE CASEY: Hello. My name is  
19 Catherine Casey. I'm a midtown East resident in  
20 Keith Powers District 4. Support intro 1476 and I  
21 urge the committee member powers to do the same.  
22 Unfortunately, the fur industry is, by definition, a  
23 violent and abusive one. That's the bottom line and  
24 that's why it needs to go. We see storms of public  
25 outrage at news reports about dogs thrown from cars

2 and lions killed as trophies, yet that I'm worse is  
3 being done every day behind closed doors to millions  
4 of animals and we call it an industry. Let's also  
5 call it institutionalized cruelty for profit. It's  
6 time for it to go. I would just like to say for the  
7 record others have focused on some of the more  
8 grotesque aspects of the abuse of the fur industry.  
9 But had to those the idea of being a wild animal and  
10 normalized for the full of your blighted life. With  
11 no hope of reprieve. That's no small thing. Is  
12 real, relentless torment that is an undeniable tool  
13 of the trade. Some of claimed the ban on fur would  
14 somehow violate our freedoms. This suggestion is.  
15 Freedom doesn't or should we mean freedom to indulge  
16 our vanity at the cost of the creature's skins.  
17 Haven't we learned by now the brutality is seldom an  
18 earmark of freedom? Does anyone really believe we  
19 have the right to inflict a lifetime of desolation,  
20 fear, and pain on a sentient creature just because we  
21 want to? Or that one's desire to play another being  
22 for a status hairband should be protected or honored  
23 in the name of freedom? Common decency screens that  
24 we have no such right. Every inclination to mercy  
25 screams now. And, by the way, someone had mentioned

2 earlier that nobody is representing the viewpoint of  
3 the consumer here. We're all representing the  
4 viewpoint of the consumer because we are all  
5 consumers. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

7 [Laughter]

8 JOYCE FRIEDMAN: Thank you, Chair Espinal  
9 and members of the committee on consumer affairs. My  
10 name is Joyce Friedman and I'm a constituent of  
11 counsel member Karen Koslowitz. I'm on the board of  
12 directors for Voters for Animal Rights and I am a  
13 formal social worker. I thank you very much for the  
14 opportunity to speak in support of 1476. I encourage  
15 the members of the committee and the full Council  
16 too, for one moment, focus on the one basic fact of  
17 this issue and to ignore all of these attempts to  
18 obfuscate the fundamental fact. Right now at this  
19 very moment, there are tens of millions of animals  
20 suffering, becoming psychotic in cages, screaming in  
21 pain and traps. Right now, send me aquatic animals  
22 such as believers and their families are struggling  
23 in underwater traps they find themselves caught in in  
24 which they slowly and painfully drowned. These  
25 animals are why we are here today in support of this

2 bill. So, please, when considering your vote, think  
3 of these individual animals and please weigh the pain  
4 and suffering of them against the claims made by the  
5 fur industry and its supporters. For example, a  
6 veterinarian who gets paid by furriers says that  
7 animal welfare is high in Denmark on fur farms. How  
8 is it in any way humane to keep the wild animal in a  
9 cage and then kill them? It is quite simple. The  
10 third trade is animal abuse. Personal choice? Not  
11 when cruelty and feeling animals are being tortured.  
12 We all know and you all know that laws, that laws  
13 exist to restrict many of our choices. We can name  
14 thousands of laws that restrict our choices for good  
15 reason. And for the business owners who made a  
16 living from this barbaric industry, they can sell  
17 clothes and prosper by using other materials.  
18 Experts have said skills are transferable. But the  
19 main point is businesses evolve and we evolve.  
20 People with support must adapt. For the millions of  
21 wild animals suffering and barbarically killed, this  
22 means everything. This bill means everything. So as  
23 councilmembers, you have this incredible opportunity  
24 to take a stand against animal abuse and cruelty. We

2 trust in your humanity and wisdom. Please lead us to  
3 a more humane world. Thank you.

4 REBECCA MILVICH: Thanks for giving us the  
5 opportunity to going to speak to you again for  
6 staying so late. My name is Rebecca Milvich. I live  
7 in East Village, Carlina Rivera's district. I am an  
8 accessories designer and I work in the fashion  
9 industry in Manhattan. All laws, trades, and  
10 societal decisions must be reverified all over again  
11 by every generation and every individual. For the  
12 sake of human rights standards, community health and  
13 enrichment, and to respect the ecological balance,  
14 which includes the sentient beings that depend on our  
15 intellect and compassion to have a right for  
16 livelihood. As every generation carries certain  
17 misconceptions, excuse me, delusions, prejudices, and  
18 inherent practices and industries, only through  
19 constant rediscovery of, unbiased research can  
20 education and mankind and our society truly advance.  
21 For an skin is not fabric. These furriers don't  
22 actually know what this proposed bill is all about,  
23 as the majority of them and never been to a fur farm  
24 themselves. They turned that she can use words like  
25 strict regulation to hide behind greed. Wild animal

2 welfare is not a concern. Only the quality of the  
3 skins and pelts are important. No real that would  
4 recommend that a wild animal the bread in a cage.  
5 Period. It is an industry that is regulating  
6 torture, not welfare regulation. There is nothing  
7 unethical about using skin or for, even if the scan  
8 is a byproduct. I hope the designers here today and  
9 the Council will recognize this as a fact. The  
10 furriers that are distraught have it easy compared to  
11 the thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of  
12 animals that have been tortured for them. For their  
13 families, to make money off of vanity. I don't feel  
14 sorry for their business owners or their employees.  
15 They have had a lot of time to prepare. We have a  
16 problem in the society and it's called violence.  
17 I'll leave it in there.

18 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

19 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible 06:42:30]  
20 nonprofit organization working [inaudible 06:42:38]  
21 New York City for adoption. I support speaker Corey  
22 Johnson's Intro bill 1476 A. [inaudible 06:42:52] in  
23 New York City. Is [inaudible 06:43:03]. Fur industry  
24 [inaudible 06:43:27]. Fur free fashion designer.  
25 [inaudible 06:43:51] department store. [inaudible

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

227

2 06:43:53]. In support of for and in New York City  
3 because [inaudible 06:44:14] speaker Corey Johnson  
4 [inaudible 06:44:22] if possible. [inaudible  
5 06:44:30]. African white dog and coyote [inaudible  
6 06:44:47].

7 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. I'm  
8 going to call the next panel. Tina Utze. Angela  
9 Anastasio. Galasia-- Galatia Aspro. Eric Ruskas.  
10 Legya Silva. Pablo Navarrete. Pablo Navarrete.

11 [Background comments]

12 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Okay.

13 LEHE SILVA: Hi. Good day. My name is  
14 Lehe Silva. I came today because I want to say to  
15 you people, I want to protect my job. I work for--  
16 in this market in 17 years and I have three little  
17 girls I want to support. So if I lost my job, what  
18 can I do? I'm asking those people for fur ban,  
19 they're coming to me to and give me money for pay the  
20 rent? Or pay the future for my daughters? How I go  
21 to my daughters and say, honey, I'm sorry. You can't  
22 go to the [inaudible 06:46:03] college because mom  
23 lost the job? It's not east in this time to find  
24 job. So, please. I don't want to [inaudible  
25 06:46:13] that I have more people inside my place.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

229

2 Same thing like my life. I want to say those people  
3 can have to the other ones. When the [inaudible  
4 06:26:28] not close the business, close jobs for  
5 people. Why not help poor people that come into the  
6 jobs? Why no help to the people who live in the  
7 street? We prefer animals or we prefer humans.  
8 God, when creates the world, give to animals to what?  
9 For some reasons. I don't want to say something  
10 else, but please, I really appreciate you giving me  
11 the opportunity to talk about this, but I want to  
12 give future to my daughters. Thank you so much.

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: All right. Any--

14 [Applause]

15 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Any furriers that  
16 submitted a card and didn't get called? Okay. All  
17 right. Great. Thank you. So everyone who I'm going  
18 to call up next are all in favor of this bill, being  
19 that it's all that's left here.

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: Or that's what's  
21 indicated on the slips.

22 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Or that's what's  
23 indicated on the-- on this list, of course. Again,  
24 if you want to leave testimony, you can. It's 8 p.m.

25 [Laughter]

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

220

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: I think we've all  
3 heard it all. I'm sure everyone wants to say it, as  
4 well. But you can leave testimony at the table or  
5 you can email it. With that said, we have Jeffrey  
6 Munch, Maria Camila Burstica, John Kristolfer,  
7 Rebecca Milvich, Jabari Brisport, Christina Gavino,  
8 Lola Columbus, Michael Dalin, Donnie Mass, Luis  
9 Hazel. Yeah. We have a few here. I'm just-- all  
10 right. So let me just call these names out. The  
11 table is full, but let me just call names to get the  
12 idea who is here. We have Cindy Kaplan. Is she  
13 here? Okay. Ms. Denise Walsh. Greg McGonagall.  
14 Marilyn Zucker. Okay. All right. You'll be the  
15 next and last panel. Did you submit?

16 [Background comments]

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Okay. Yeah.

18 JABARI BRISPORT: Cool. All right. My  
19 name is Jabari Brisport. I live in district 35,  
20 Laurie Cumbo's district. I want to thank you for  
21 your time here. I'm a public school teacher and a  
22 board member of Voters for Animal rights. I want to  
23 thank you again for listening. I'm speaking in favor  
24 of Intro 1476. Let the record state that I am a black  
25 man. I've been black my whole life. I promise. I

2 swear. And I want to say that no one in my big black  
3 family that I know of wears real fur. My mother has  
4 this fake fur coat that she wears once in a blue  
5 moon. I have a winter coat lined with fake fur.  
6 It's actually made-- it's a very soft material name  
7 satifur made from hemp fibers and recycled bottles  
8 and you didn't need to murder anybody and rip their  
9 skin off to get it. So it's weird to me to hear  
10 that the fur industry is saying that banning fur is  
11 racist. It's weird that people who look like me were  
12 bribed with a 250 dollar amex card to coming to City  
13 Hall last week and holding up signs for a photo op.  
14 And it's sad that people who probably really needed  
15 that money were used and tokenized last week. And,  
16 you know, it's weird, but I actually find it not  
17 surprising are-- Our country has a long history of  
18 using black bodies to further agendas. However, I  
19 rest assured knowing that any black person with a  
20 knowledge of American History can understand that  
21 sometimes an industry needs to die because sometimes  
22 that industry is being propped up by predominantly  
23 white people. Predominantly white men whose main  
24 argument is that they'll lose their job and they  
25 don't care that that job requires making someone

2 scream or that the job requires making someone bleed  
3 or that the job requires making someone die. New  
4 York City is a progressive leader in so many  
5 respects, but we're not in the 21st Century when it  
6 comes to fur. So I sincerely hope the city Council  
7 votes to bring New York City into modern times as  
8 opposed to sustaining an industry started by cavemen.  
9 Thank you.

10 DONNIE MOSS: My name is Donnie Moss. I  
11 live in council district 3. I support the bill and  
12 I'd actually like to point out, Council member  
13 Espinal, that the vast majority, if not all of the  
14 people who remain in this room, are-- support this  
15 bill, but we have nothing to gain or lose personally  
16 is this bill is passed. Yet the fur industry, which  
17 profits off of this trade, they're gone. So I'd like  
18 for you to convey to your fellow Council members on  
19 this committee that the people who stayed until the  
20 end to testify were supporters of this bill who had  
21 nothing to gain if it passes or doesn't pass. I'd  
22 also like to dedicate just five seconds of my time  
23 to-- for a moment of silence for the 100 million  
24 victims of the fur trade who will die this year. The  
25 veterinarian from Denmark, she said she was a fur--

2 she was a fur industry representative said-- she  
3 complained that there was a lot of misinformation  
4 being spread. I don't know if you remember that  
5 testimony. And in her next breath, she said that  
6 animals in the fur industry are euthanized.  
7 Euthanasia is an act of kindness reserved for sick  
8 and dying individuals. The fur industry doesn't  
9 euthanize individuals. They murder them. And it's  
10 this kind of humane washing that leads unsuspecting  
11 consumers in New York City to buy real fur thinking  
12 that they're doing something that's okay. This  
13 industry is built on lies which is why it's hidden.  
14 I don't-- Council member Espinal, I think that one  
15 of the fur industry reps said that you were invited  
16 into the showroom to see how they work, but have  
17 the-- have you been invited onto a fur factory farm  
18 where these animals are intensively confined and spin  
19 in circles because they've gone insane? A mink who  
20 spends-- Who lives on 200-- 2500 acres, an aquatic  
21 animal, is confined in a cage for life? That was  
22 just the beginning.

23 [laughter]

24 LULA COLUMBUS: Hello. Thank you for  
25 this opportunity. My name is Lula Columbus and I am

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 13

2 a New York City consumer and I just wanted to add my  
3 two cents. Fur is completely unnecessary in today's  
4 society. We are not walking around naked like our  
5 ancestors once did. Today, a fur coat is considered  
6 a status symbol and/or fashion statement. And let's  
7 start calling it what it really is: it is a skin coat  
8 because the fur rests upon the skin of the animal of  
9 which it is torn. Most of the time, this happens  
10 while the animal is still alive and conscious and  
11 completely aware of what has just happened. Its  
12 helpless, bleeding body is then thrown into a pile  
13 with other skinned animals, some still conscious  
14 while they lay there in excruciating pain until they  
15 eventually expire. This is the material of horror  
16 movies. It should not exist in a civilized society.  
17 Many top designers and retailers have already  
18 realized this and gone fur-free and technologies  
19 exist to produce eco-friendly faux fur. We stand  
20 before you today asking you to finally put an end to  
21 this brutal, outdated atrocity by passing Intro 1476.  
22 Send it into the past where it belongs. Thank you.

23 MICHAEL DAWLING: My name is Michael  
24 Dawling. I'm a Park Slope resident and I fully  
25 support Intro 1476. I am on the board of directors

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

2 1 1

2 of Tamarline (sp?) Sanctuary and Preserve in New  
3 Jersey whose founders are current residents of  
4 Tribeca and fully support this ban, as well. Our  
5 mission at Tamarline is to rescue and protect animals  
6 who are abused and neglected and, as a preserve, we  
7 are dedicated to the conservation and protection of  
8 wildlife. On our 336 acre sanctuary, we are home to  
9 coyotes, rabbits, and fox. The same animals that the  
10 fur industry would love to turn into a fur coat, a  
11 pom pom on top of a hat, a pointless trim on a coat,  
12 a keychain, earmuffs, or a cell case. We are lucky  
13 enough to live side-by-side with these beautiful  
14 animals and we are honored to protect them. I have  
15 seen what leg hole traps can do to a mother who was  
16 out looking for food for her children. I have seen  
17 coyotes missing feet and limbs, covered in blood,  
18 guaranteed to die a slow, painful death because they  
19 were so desperate to escape a trap. I have seen how  
20 the fur industry tears families apart. I have seen  
21 how the greed of the fur industry destroys lives and  
22 I have seen how compassionate people cry when they  
23 see footage of what the fur industry does to these  
24 animals. At our sanctuary, we give tours to the  
25 public. Many of who travel to us from New York City

2 and on these tours, we educate people about the  
3 mistreatment of animals by human hands. What we see  
4 from our outreach is a generation who is turning away  
5 from animal cruelty. We see a generation turning  
6 towards compassion and justice and we see a  
7 generation that is turning away from fur. We at  
8 Tamarline urge the city Council to follow in the  
9 footsteps of other great cities and ban the barbaric  
10 fur industry from our own. When Trump was elected  
11 and people feared for their freedom, the leaders of  
12 New York City declared that we would be a sanctuary  
13 city for all who needed protection. From one  
14 sanctuary to another, please protect these animals  
15 who cannot speak for themselves and support Intro  
16 1476.

17 JOHN: Hello. My name is John. Oh,  
18 thank you. My name is John and I'm from the Bronx  
19 and I want to thank you guys personally for giving us  
20 this animal shelter that we needed for so long. For  
21 so many years. State of the art animal shelter I  
22 understand, too. I mean, we're moving up. You know,  
23 not just any run-of-the-mill shelter. You know,  
24 we're going to be a shining example to others of what  
25 we got and what they can have. And with this bill,

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

216

2 we can also be that same shining example to others of  
3 what we've done and what we recognize and what we can  
4 become down the road. Not just us, but the little  
5 one. Little kids who are growing up now, you know,  
6 who need an influence on them to make them better  
7 people than we are. You know, make this world a  
8 better place. And what better way to influence them  
9 rather-- You know, we-- Just by showing them that  
10 it's not just about us. Okay? It's not just about  
11 us. It's not just about people. Okay. It's about,  
12 you know, it's about the little hamsters. It's about  
13 the little mice. It's about the animals we are  
14 killing in Africa that they may never see in real  
15 life because we still consider animals to be dumb  
16 animals. They're stupid. They don't know anything.  
17 They're not like us. You know, they're idiots. You  
18 know, we throw them in a cage and we use them. You  
19 know? I mean, that's pretty barbaric thinking and  
20 anybody who's actually had an animal look into your  
21 eyes and look into you, not through you or past you  
22 or at you, but into you, knows that they're just like  
23 us. You know, and let's go. 1476. Okay. Do it.

24 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you guys.

25 Cindy Kaplan. Denise Walsh. Greg McGonagall.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

217

2 Marilyn Zucker. And yes. What's your name, ma'am?

3 Felicia Greenfield? Please, you-- You may begin.

4 You may begin.

5 CINDY KAPLAN: Good evening. My name  
6 is Cindy Kaplan. I am a native New Yorker and my  
7 council representative is Alan Miesel. I am here as  
8 a representative of the voiceless innocents, the  
9 animals of planet earth, in support of Intro 1476.  
10 It is well known and said that animals not only have  
11 intelligence, they have emotional lives and  
12 experience physical pain as we humans do. The  
13 question is not can they reason nor can they talk,  
14 but can they suffer? Why should the law refuse its  
15 protection to any sensitive being? Jeremy Bentham,  
16 1789, an introduction to the principals of morals and  
17 legislation. The bottom line is there is no  
18 rationalizing the torture of living, sentient beings.  
19 It is unconscionable. No ifs, ands, or buts. As for  
20 displaced workers, my own heart goes out to them.  
21 Let's discuss how we can help them, too, to  
22 transition, Segway, sustain themselves during the  
23 transition. But as a civilized progressive, ever  
24 evolving compassionate culture, society, and great  
25 city, banning the torture of animals must trump

2 economics issues just as economic benefits never  
3 justified slavery. Many of the anti-ban arguments  
4 made here today such as how it's economically vital  
5 to a certain segment of the populace and how it is an  
6 important cultural aspect for the African American  
7 community could have been made in support of slavery  
8 in the American south once upon a time in this  
9 country. Wrong is wrong and the time is here for the  
10 abolition of fur. This is a historic, monumental,  
11 defining moment in New York City history. Please  
12 vote your conscience and be on the right side of  
13 history and thank you so much for giving us all this  
14 chance to speak and for listening to us. Thank you  
15 so much.

16 GREG MCGONAGALL: All right. Hello. My  
17 name is Greg McGonagall. As a former resident of  
18 Bensoners, Brooklyn, I'm very happy the Council  
19 member Justin Brannon is supporting Intro 1476 and I  
20 encourage his colleagues to do the same. When I look  
21 at the other side, what I notice most is the mention  
22 of jobs and tradition. They feel if the sale of fur  
23 is banned through the five boroughs, they will be the  
24 victim of something unjust. In reality, that  
25 couldn't be further from the truth. In grand scheme

2 of things, the actual victims are the ones without a  
3 choice or a chance. The ones who are bread on fur  
4 farms with virtually no space to move throughout  
5 their abbreviated lives. The ones who are caught in  
6 their natural habitat, left for days in traps without  
7 food or water, only to eventually be shot in the  
8 head. The ones who are skinned alive or anally  
9 electrocuted so they can be draped on a human's body.  
10 Even though there are countless alternatives that are  
11 not only more affordable, but extremely more ethical.  
12 The other side is worried about their livelihood.  
13 They want their fellow citizens to believe that, if  
14 fur is banned, they will not have the ability to work  
15 in any other field that is less cruel. If anyone in  
16 their room believes that, they must give these men  
17 and women more credit. It may be easier for them to  
18 do what they have always done, but as we have learned  
19 time and time again, throughout the history of nation  
20 and the world, tradition doesn't justify something  
21 that is flat out immoral. There are countless  
22 opportunities for these individuals to work in  
23 fields, including apparel, where people would be  
24 happy to spend their money in a more conscious  
25 manner, including everyone in this room. However, as

2 it stands right now, these men and women are  
3 contributing to something which is a blemish on our  
4 great city. We have an excellent opportunity to do  
5 right by everyone and I sincerely hope that justice  
6 is served for all involved, including the true  
7 victims who have no say in this room tonight. Thank  
8 you. Sorry.

9 DENISE WALSH: That's okay. Thank you  
10 members of the committee for allowing me to speak in  
11 favor of the proposed bill to prohibit the sale of  
12 fur apparel in New York City Intro 1476. I also  
13 greatly appreciate the Council Speaker Corey Johnson  
14 and respective members sponsored this important and  
15 compassionate legislation. My name is Denise Walsh  
16 and I'm from Bayside Queens, District 19. My New  
17 York City Council member is Paul Vallone. The time  
18 has come to stop selling fur, which is a product of a  
19 horrific killing of animals such as foxes, coyotes,  
20 minks, rabbits and, yes, even millions of dogs and  
21 cats in China. It is a fact and it is the truth that  
22 each such animal will suffer an unspeakable and  
23 barbaric death. It's awful. And prior to, the  
24 animals suffer tremendously by being kept in  
25 miserable wire cages on so-called fur farms. Wild

2 animals love to roam for miles every day, but in  
3 these facilities, they are denied their natural  
4 existence and, instead, are perversely confined to  
5 small cages. How terrible. And those trapped in the  
6 wild fair no better. They will suffer alone until  
7 the trapper arrives to bludgeon them to death.  
8 Terrible. Further, in the US and other countries  
9 such as China, there are simply no animal welfare  
10 laws and regulations to protect these vulnerable fur-  
11 bearing animals being held captive. Think about it.  
12 The persons on the fur farms or trappers can do  
13 whatever they want and indeed they do. They go on to  
14 kill these animals in the most excruciatingly painful  
15 manner and do so with complete impunity. Many  
16 persons have decided not to wear fur because it  
17 inflicts a horrific and painful death on the animals.  
18 Countless designers have dropped fur, as well. The  
19 cities of San Francisco, Los Angeles, West Hollywood,  
20 and Berkeley have enacted bans on the sale of fur  
21 apparel. A recent poll showed that 75 percent of New  
22 York City respondents support this city-wide law to  
23 prohibit the sale of fur. And I ask the city to  
24 please always remember that. In concluding, as a  
25 society, we owe it to ourselves and these innocent

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

252

2 helpless animals to finally say no to the atrocity of  
3 torturing animals to death for their fur. As the  
4 fashion capital of the world, New York City can lead  
5 the way in making this happen. I respectfully  
6 request that you cosponsor and support Intro 1476,  
7 the ban on the sale of fur apparel in New York City.

8 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

9 DENISE WALSH: Thank you for your  
10 consideration.

11 MARILYN ZUCKER: My name is Marilyn  
12 Zucker. I'm a teacher and a member of many animal  
13 organizations including Anonymous to the Voiceless in  
14 which we expose the horrific fur industry as well as  
15 other animal industries. I'm going to go a little  
16 off my speech here, so let's see how it goes.  
17 Imagine you live near a long building. One day you  
18 enter and discover that your neighbor has been  
19 hording dogs. Row after row, cage after cage,  
20 hundreds of dogs. Filthy, wired cages with no room  
21 to move. No bedding. No diversion. Filled with  
22 terrified dogs. They wait in cages until the day  
23 your neighbor drags them out with a choke pole  
24 clamped-- snout shut.

25 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

2 MARILYN ZUCKER: Trust electrodes up  
3 their vaginas or into their anuses and electrocutes  
4 them to death. These dogs are foxes. Or imagine  
5 your neighbor prefers to torture cats. He breeds  
6 them. They spend their lives in small, filthy wire  
7 cages until the day he gasses them. And then he skins  
8 them and suppose the cats survive the gassing. He  
9 skins those cats alive. These cats are mink. You'd  
10 be horrified. You would call the police and the  
11 abuse would make the news. We love our dogs and cats  
12 and we know that they feel and suffer as we do, but  
13 we have somehow allowed the fur industry, an industry  
14 that exists through nothing but greed to convince us  
15 that compassion should end with our pets. This  
16 industry is nothing but an industry of lies. In  
17 preparation for today, I went on many of the fur  
18 industry's own website and I found that not one of  
19 them had true transparency. None of them showed the  
20 actual gassing, clubbing, drowning, trapping of the  
21 animals. They only showed happy animals in rows of  
22 cages. They didn't show the babies taken away from  
23 the mothers before they were fully weaned. They  
24 didn't show any of the true torture that goes on  
25 behind the scenes in the industry. And-- Thank you.

2 FELICIA GREENFIELD: Hi. Thank you  
3 again for your time. My name is Felicia Greenfield.  
4 I'm an Upper East Side mom. A Keith Powers  
5 constituent. And I'm here to speak for those that  
6 don't have a voice. In the 80's, my mother actually  
7 worked in the fur industry. It seemed wrong as a  
8 kid, but if my mom was doing it, I figured it  
9 couldn't be that bad. And then I grew up. It's  
10 incumbent upon every person, especially those with  
11 your power, to directly affect so many lives. To  
12 question everything. With the advent of the  
13 internet, we can no longer say we didn't know it was  
14 wrong. The excessive physical and emotional cruelty  
15 inflicted on hundreds of thousands of sentient lives  
16 for the sole purpose of making a profit is disgusting  
17 and beneath the dignity of any decent human being.  
18 The greatest city in the world can no longer allow  
19 this. I spent time over the last week on social  
20 media reading posts and getting trolled by the fur  
21 industry. With complete honesty, I can say I didn't  
22 find one argument against this ban without a  
23 reasonable solution.

24 The end of a family dynasty. My family's  
25 electronics business started by my grandfather after

2 World War II shuttered recently because we didn't  
3 keep up with the times. We had to move on. Job  
4 loss. These textile skills are transferable and  
5 we're in one of the fashion capitals of the world, so  
6 do what you do with any material that does not bleed.

7 Freedom of choice. A, they're forgetting  
8 about the animal's choice. B, their choice is  
9 devastating to our environment. C, laws by  
10 definition, regulate the actions of a community's  
11 members. See smoking ban, plastic bag ban, loud  
12 music ban. D, if your choice requires the murder of  
13 innocent lives, it needs to be taken from you.

14 Let me finally point out that every  
15 single person that was here from the fur industry  
16 were representing only what was best for themselves.  
17 Those of us still here to help the helpless have  
18 nothing to personally gain. We've given our entire  
19 day and evening just to implore you to make the only  
20 right, moral, and just decisions for the greater  
21 good. So [speaking Spanish].

22 ELIZABETH ARDUBAY: Hello. Thank you,  
23 Council Speaker Corey Johnson for sponsoring the bill  
24 to prohibit the sale of fur apparel in New York City  
25 and to all who have supported it. My name is

2 Elizabeth Ardubay. I am a native New Yorker and I  
3 also have immigrant parents and I represent Total  
4 Liberation New York, an organization who is committed  
5 to shining a light on the exploitation and oppression  
6 of animals, giving them a voice and coming to their  
7 defense. Millions upon millions of animals are  
8 murdered needlessly by cruel and barbaric means each  
9 year only to end up little unrecognizable bits of her  
10 till later be stitched together and sold for profit  
11 as for trim, hats, coats, novelty items, or other  
12 useless trinkets. While there were counter arguments  
13 to try to introduce culture, fashion, or tradition as  
14 a valid excuse to this conversation, these arguments  
15 like actual reason. Let us pause and consider where  
16 we would be today if we stood by silently and did  
17 nothing in the name of progress based on these  
18 reasons alone. There appears to be a disconnect and  
19 unwillingness to accept any sort of change or to  
20 experiment in new technology, sustainable fabrics.  
21 Perhaps it's having no vision for a cruelty free  
22 future. It is not really want? This is a completely  
23 unacceptable model for New York City especially when  
24 New Yorkers are calling out for a compassionate and  
25 humane city. West Hollywood, San Francisco, LA, and

2 Berkeley are only the beginning of a growing trend of  
3 forward thinking cities in the US to ban the sale of  
4 fur. New York must be next. We must be next because  
5 these society cannot continue business as usual in  
6 the name of vanity, profit, and brutality. We must  
7 be next because the world looks at us as a fashion  
8 leader and we must respond without hesitation that  
9 New York City is banning the sale of her. I think  
10 the city Council for their time and consideration for  
11 our city, our citizens, in the animals. Thank you.

12 [Applause]

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you. The  
14 evening is not over yet. We have one more person.  
15 Shelby.

16 SHELBY HARVEY: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: Thank you.

18 SHELBY HARVEY: Good evening. My name  
19 is Sylvie Harvey. I live on the upper East side is a  
20 constituent of Ben Kallos and I'm speaking on behalf  
21 of myself as well as an eight year volunteer speaking  
22 on behalf of the voice was wild animals that I hope  
23 to rehabilitate as a wildlife rescue Center volunteer  
24 on Long Island for a great part of my youth and  
25 teenage years. I'm going to go ahead and skip a lot

2 of the information that is already been touched on  
3 tonight by other members, as I submitted my testimony  
4 as well and that can be read. But I do just want to  
5 implore my councilmember, Ben Kallos, to take a stand  
6 on this matter. I encourage him to support 1476 and  
7 move forward with the rest of those that have already  
8 done so to this point and I hope that New York City  
9 can remain as one of the forward thinking progressive  
10 cities stood up to be in times previously and join  
11 Los Angeles and San Francisco as one of the forward  
12 thinking and progressive fashion industry leaders  
13 today. Thank you.

14 DESIREE MATOS: Good evening and thank  
15 you for staying behind to listen to us. My name is  
16 Desiree Matos. I'm a social worker and I am also the  
17 president of a nonprofit organization called Keeping  
18 Warm Dog Houses that gives free shelters to dogs that  
19 are being neglected in their owner's back yards and  
20 are not allowed to live indoors with their families.  
21 My Council member is Barry Grodenchik and I'm in  
22 favor of Intro 1476. The fur industry has been in  
23 business for hundreds of years. No one really knew  
24 how these furs were made or even gave it a second  
25 though. Today, with the accessibility of the

2 internet and google searches, we know all too well  
3 about the torture and slaughter and beautiful  
4 innocent animals for their fur. We know about the  
5 fur farms where animals are kept in filthy cramped  
6 cages where they are denied everything that is  
7 natural to them. We know about the excruciatingly  
8 painful and horrific torture and slaughter for so-  
9 called fashion and status. There is nothing  
10 glamorous about this blood trade. What has been done  
11 behind closed doors far away from the fancy fur shops  
12 and away from public view can now be seen with a  
13 simple google search and the click of a mouse. Now  
14 we know. The secret is out. No more business as  
15 usual, turning away or ignoring the truth. Those who  
16 buy fur, those who manufacture and sell it have blood  
17 on their hands. They didn't give these animals life  
18 and they should not be allowed to take it from them.  
19 A great majority of humans possess the ability to  
20 feel compassion, empathy, sorrow, and regret,  
21 especially for those who are defenseless and  
22 voiceless. A new day is dawning and we are evolving  
23 and realizing that just because an industry has been  
24 around for hundreds of years doesn't mean it should  
25 continue. It's wrong, inhuman, cruel, and barbaric.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

260

2 We don't need to wear fur. There are many  
3 alternatives that does involve skins of animals that  
4 are just as warm and fashionable. In the words of  
5 Dr. Maya Angelou, do the best you can until you know  
6 better. Then when know better, do better. We know--  
7 We can do better for the animals. Today is the day.  
8 New York City is the place. Fur-free NYC.

9 [Applause]

10 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: All right. Taking  
11 advantage of the last few seconds.

12 [Laughter]

13 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: All right. With  
14 that said, I'm going to get home to my cat, Betty,  
15 who has been alone--

16 DESIREE MATOS: Yay.

17 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: for over 12 hours  
18 now. She's probably going crazy. So this meeting is  
19 adjourned.

20 DESIREE MATOS: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: And the process  
22 is-- This is the Speaker's bill. I'm sure he's  
23 going to go through all the testimony with his staff  
24 and then we'll have updates.

25 DESIREE MATOS: Thank you.

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

261

2 CHAIRPERSON ESPINAL: From the staff.

3 [Applause] [Gavel] [Background

4 comments]

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS LICENSING

262

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date May 27, 2019