



November 16, 2021

Chairman Carolyn Dykema
Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
24 Beacon Street Room 473F
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Dykema,

The Massachusetts Conservation Alliance is opposed to both S.623 & H.965 These Acts would prohibit the sale of fur products and effectively put an end to recreational trapping of furbearers in Massachusetts. We view these statutes as hostile to sporting traditions and harmful to the principles of scientific wildlife management. These proposed statutes are reminiscent of question one, the 1996 ballot question that banned leghold traps.

Question one caused a proliferation of problem species like beaver, muskrat and coyotes. The failure of question one is seen in the increased property damage, disease and habitat destruction caused by imbalance in the natural environment. The real failure of question one can be seen in declining license revenues which fund conservation in our state. Replacing licensed trappers with PAC agents is a net loss for conservation and a tragic mistake that should not be repeated. Recreational trappers utilize the animals taken for legitimate purposes. At the very least the heritage and traditions of recreational trappers and sportsmen are worthy of inclusion as an exemption. PAC Agents discard the animals they kill without using any portion. Sportsmen condemn statutorily mandated wonton waste of resources

The conclusions offered in section Sections 1A & 1B are misleading and false. Conditions on fur farms and the conditions of healthy population of wild species are not related in any significant way. The statement that animals "that are slaughtered for their fur endure tremendous suffering" should be addressed through targeted regulation of the fur farming industry not sweeping bans. Recreational trapping is already a highly regulated activity. Any new recreational trapping regulations should be undertaken by the Division of Fish and Wildlife. The DFW is the agency equipped with experts who can insure that any changes are consistent with scientific wildlife management.

Sincerely,

Joseph Afonso
Co-chair MCA

Paul Johnson
Co-chair MCA

