



British Fur Trade Association  
Sky Gardens  
153 Wandsworth Road  
London  
SW8 2GB

Janet Finch-Saunders AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

1<sup>st</sup> August 2019

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders,

I am aware that there is currently an on-line petition calling for the Welsh Government to implement a ban on the sale and import of natural fur in Wales.

I believe that your Committee will consider the next stage of the petition when it closes and, therefore, I thought it would be helpful to write to you setting out a number of facts and putting the 'other side' of the debate. I also wanted to outline the role that the fur industry is playing in driving up animal welfare standards both in the UK and internationally and to highlight that simply implementing such a ban would actually damage such animal welfare standards.

I would also like to place on record that I of course disagree with the wording and phrasing of the petition and believe that this is purposely misleading and emotive. However, I am aware, of course, that this open to the organisers of the petition to decide and represents no formal position of the Welsh Assembly or of you Committee.

Let me state that the fur industry is committed to the highest possible standards around animal welfare, environmental protection, and sustainability. The industry will shortly launch and roll out FURMARK, an international mark that will guarantee standards in these areas across the entire supply chain (including at the point of sale).

FURMARK will ensure and guarantee that each stage of the production process meets strict requirements that reflect globally recognised animal welfare and sustainability standards.

The FURMARK certification programmes are based on independent scientific and veterinary advice and best practice: importantly, the verification of each scheme will be conducted by independent

third parties. All stages of the supply chain are subject to comprehensive, transparent, and independently verified traceability systems and will be subject to an external audit.

Fur is also of course a natural product compared to synthetic, fossil fuels-derived, faux alternatives with a production process that accords to local, regional, and international standards around environmental protection.

With the introduction of FURMARK, the five major global auction houses are committed to selling certified farm-raised and wild fur from 2020. Ultimately, FURMARK enables retailers, brands, and consumers to have complete assurance and confidence when buying natural fur.

This will also allow for a clear labelling scheme that was the subject of an inquiry by the DEFRA Select Committee last year.

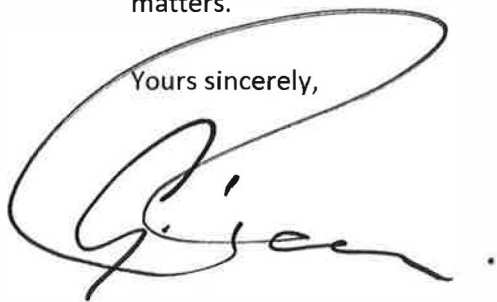
I appreciate and recognise that fur is a subject that can divide opinion. It may be helpful therefore to highlight the results of recent polling conducted by Populus in June 2019 into attitudes towards fur in the UK. The results show that the overwhelming majority of people in the UK are content to both consume and wear products that originate from animals.

They also show, crucially, that it is a minority (31%) that disagree with the statement "I think it is acceptable for people to wear products that come from animals". People are supportive of the sale of fur products that accord to high animal welfare standards, environmental sustainability and are subject to independent inspection: again, only a minority favouring of a ban on the sale of fur in the UK. The results also show that those aged between 18 to 24 are more likely to buy fur that accords to these principles. This is borne out by the continued popularity of fur on the high-street and in every day clothing garments.

Finally, we welcome the UK's desire to drive up standards in animal welfare internationally as it exits the European Union and takes its place on the various international bodies and institutions. We believe that the fur industry in the UK and globally can help support these ambitions and we would welcome a discussion with your officials in this respect.

Finally, if I can provide any further information regarding the fur industry in the UK please do not hesitate to contact me. We would welcome an early opportunity to meet you to discuss these matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Giles Roca', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Giles Roca  
Chief Executive  
British Fur Trade Association