



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

August 20, 2020

Joseph K. Miner, M.D., M.S.P.H.
Executive Director
Utah Department of Health

Dear Dr. Miner,

I'm writing on behalf of PETA and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide, including tens of thousands in Utah. In light of the news that the novel coronavirus has been found in minks and workers on two fur farms in the state so far, I urge you to shut down such operations—a move that would protect the health of workers and Utah residents, as well as sparing countless minks a miserable death for fur.

Other countries have faced this problem and taken decisive action. In May, a mink farm in Spain was shut down by the government after [87% of the minks](#) and seven of the 14 employees became infected. In June, the Dutch parliament voted to [close](#) fur farms there permanently after minks and workers tested positive for the virus.

When it comes to public-health risks, fur farms are like live-animal markets, including the one in Wuhan, China, where the novel coronavirus is widely believed to have originated. Filthy fur farms—or animal factories—are packed with sick, stressed, and injured animals and are breeding grounds for disease. On them, animals are confined to cramped, adjacent or even stacked wire cages that allow for cross-contamination through urine, excrement, pus, and blood—creating the perfect conditions for the spread of contagious diseases. These animals are known to carry pathogens and diseases that can readily be transmitted to humans, including tularemia, LA-MRSA, hepatitis E, influenza, and salmonellosis.

Even before the current crisis, fur was out of favor. Almost all major designers and retailers—including Macy's, Prada, Coach, Gucci, Michael Kors, Versace, Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, and Giorgio Armani—have banned it. In addition, countries around the world—including Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.K.—have ended fur farming. No one needs fur farms.

For the sake of the minks who value their lives and to protect humans, we urge you to shut down all fur farms in your state now. We hope to hear from you soon.

Very truly yours,

Ingrid E. Newkirk
President

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