

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: February 14, 2019

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso *Sharon M. Tso*
Chief Legislative Analyst Council File No: 19-0002-S23
Assignment No: 19-02-0109

SUBJECT: Wildlife Protection Act of 2019

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Koretz – Blumenfield) to include in the City’s 2019-2020 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for AB 273 (Gonzalez) which would extend protections to all fur-bearing animals in California from commercial trapping.

SUMMARY

In 2017, a total of 133 trapping licenses were sold in California for purposes of recreation and commerce, with 68 trappers reported killing a total of 1,568 animals in California. Among the 10 species reported killed were grey fox, coyote, beaver, badger, and mink.

The Resolution (Koretz – Blumenfield) recommends support for AB 273 (Gonzalez), the Wildlife Protection Act of 2019, which would prohibit trapping any fur-bearing mammal or nongame mammal for purposes of recreation or commerce in fur. AB 273 would also prohibit the sale of the raw fur of any fur-bearing mammal or nongame mammal otherwise lawfully taken pursuant to the Fish and Game Code or regulations adopted pursuant to that code.

BACKGROUND

Existing law requires a person engaging in, or conducting wholly or in part the business of buying, selling, trading or dealing in raw furs of fur-bearing mammals or nongame mammals to procure a fur dealer license from the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Existing law also requires a person who is employed by a licensed fur dealer to act on behalf of the fur dealer to procure a fur agent license from the department. AB 273 (Gonzalez) would eliminate fur dealer and fur agent licenses.

On February 12, 2019, Council first considered and voted 13–1 in favor of an ordinance prohibiting the manufacture, sale, distribution, trade, import, and export of fur within the City. The ordinance may be adopted by majority vote upon second hearing in Council. Other cities, including San Francisco and West Hollywood, and Berkeley have already enacted similar ordinances. Localities seeking to prohibit the sale of fur have been met with difficulty regarding State law, which currently protects the sale of fur from an animal killed by trapping. By prohibiting commercial trapping, AB 273 (Gonzalez) would increase the effectiveness of these local bans.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife received approximately \$15,000 for the 133 commercial trapping licenses it issued in 2018-19. This is not sufficient for full cost recovery for the regulatory,

management, and enforcement activities of the Department of Fish and Wildlife needed to monitor trapping.

Non-consumptive wildlife watching and tourism represent a larger part of California's economy than commercial trapping and the fur trade. Several hundred pelts were left unsold during the 2016-17 season and 2017-18 season, creating a situation where furs trapped for commercial purposes are not generating economic activity.

DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED

City Attorney
Department of Animal Services
Zoo

BILL STATUS

01/24/19 Read first time. To print.
02/07/19 Referred to Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife.



Tristan Noack
Analyst

SMT:tcjn

Attachment: Resolution

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must first have been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, the Wildlife Protection Act of 2019, (AB 273 - Gonzalez Fletcher, D-San Diego), proposes to ban the commercial trapping of fur; and

WHEREAS, the commercial trapping of wildlife for their fur in California is an activity and industry which has become economically unviable for taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, commercial animal trapping can involve killing animals through strangulation, gassing and anal electrocution in order to ensure undamaged pelts; and

WHEREAS, trapping for fur is a form of animal cruelty that also endangers the long-term well-being of coyotes, foxes, badgers and other fur-bearing animals by depleting their populations; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 the state banned the trapping of bobcats with the support of the City of Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, the approximately \$15,000 in revenue received by the state Department of Fish and Wildlife for licensing a total of just 133 commercial trappers statewide does not provide for full-cost recovery for the regulatory, management and enforcement activities of the Department needed to monitor trapping, creating a de facto subsidy for commercial fur trapping; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the minimal revenue generated by the sale of the furs of the animals killed by trappers is dwarfed by the millions of dollars that non-consumptive wildlife-watching generates in California's economy; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles is in the process of banning the farming and sale of fur within the city limits (CF 18-0538); and

WHEREAS, the passage of AB 273 will protect California's wildlife, ban a cruel practice and end a costly subsidy to an obsolete industry.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2019-2020 state legislative program SUPPORT for AB 273, the Wildlife Protection Act of 2019, which will extend protections to all fur-bearing animals in California from commercial trapping.

PRESENTED BY: Paul Koretz
PAUL KORETZ, Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY: Bob Blum

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