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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Calls for change as coronavirus lands in B.C. mink farm

VICTORIA, BC - The pandemic-causing coronavirus has landed in a British Columbia mink farm, bringing Canada into the fold with a dozen other nations facing crises due to these industrial fur farms.

The Fur-Bearers, a charitable organization founded in 1953, is calling for the political will to bring the fur farming industry in Canada to a close due to the inherent, well-documented animal welfare issues, as well as the clear, new dangers of coronavirus.

“Though ‘biosecurity measures’ are being discussed by industry and provincial agricultural authorities, the outbreak on a B.C. farm announced on December 6 indicates that biosecurity measures aren’t an effective defense in Canada,” says Lesley Fox, Executive Director of The Fur-Bearers. “We’ve watched this virus rip through European and American fur farms, resulting in millions of killed mink and infecting an unknown volume of farm workers internationally. It’s time for our federal government to step up and transition farmers out of the fur industry and into sustainable and green businesses.”

"Thousands of mink are kept in small wire cages next to each other on these farms. Under these conditions, outbreaks of COVID-19 can spread like wildfire and acquire new mutations that may change the severity of disease, treatment or susceptible host," says Dr. Jan Hajek, an infectious diseases doctor at Vancouver General Hospital. "A parallel epidemic or reservoir of the virus could be established in animals that could then spread back to humans at a later date and impair our own response to this pandemic. Infection control interventions like face masks for workers, and laboratory surveillance to catch outbreaks early can help reduce, but will not eliminate these risks"

A recent Research Co. survey showed that 81% of Canadians oppose killing animals for their fur. As there are fewer than 100 fur farms across the nation, creating a transition program in tandem with public health efforts to identify and eliminate the spread of coronavirus on and around fur farms nation-wide is a responsible, economically-beneficial, humane choice. All that’s necessary is political will.

“We are asking Canadians to have the conversation with their representatives about industrial fur farms,” says Fox. “The risks are clear, the options are clear, and the will of the public is clear. Visit TheFurBearers.com and sign the petition today.”

The Fur-Bearers, along with Drs. Jan Hajek and Robert Reynolds, wrote an opinion piece in July 2020 identifying mink farms as a risk for the spread of coronavirus in Canada. The governments' response was that they were working with fur farmers to implement "biosecurity measures."

The Fur-Bearers, a charitable, non-partisan organization, was founded in 1953 to advocate on behalf of fur-bearing animals in the wild and in confinement, as well as promote wildlife coexistence solutions within communities.

The Fur-Bearers' petition: <https://thefurbearers.com/blog/action-alert-tell-canada-to-take-action-on-mink-farms/>

Research Co. Survey: <https://researchco.ca/2020/09/22/canada-us-animals/>

CONTACT:

Lesley Fox

The Fur-Bearers

Executive Director

Lesley@TheFurBearers.com

604-435-1850

Jan Hajek, MD

Infectious Diseases, Vancouver General Hospital

604-875-4588

ianhajek@gmail.com