



May 22, 2020

MLA Lana Popham
Minister of Agriculture
Room 325 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
AGR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister,

We, The Fur-Bearers and our thousands of supporters, are writing with grave concern about the status of mink farms in British Columbia and the ongoing pandemic.

As per earlier conversations, your Deputy Ministers' office informed wildlife non-profit The Fur-Bearers that concerns regarding mink farms and COVID-19 are noted, but that "raising or keeping of furbearing animals by a person licensed to do so is regulated through the Fur Farm Regulation via the Animal Health Act. In addition to providing a licensing system for fur farmers, the Fur Farm Regulation also ensures that strict animal health standards are followed."

Concerns regarding coronavirus, COVID-19 and mink farms were again raised on April 26, with another communication that indicated mink in the Netherlands on farms were found to have coronavirus. The Fur-Bearers have not received any further communication on this issue.

Dutch media have reported that at least one worker from a mink farm in the Netherlands has now contracted the illness from mink, creating another red flag for British Columbia's 13 mink farms, many of which are in established communities.

Further, documents obtained from your Ministry via Freedom of Information Act request show that none of British Columbia's 13 mink farms were inspected from January 1, 2019 through March 2020.

With the available evidence now indicating that these farms can be transmission points for the pandemic virus and that there is no record of recent inspections, the undersigned are anxious to hear your Ministry's plans to manage these potential sites of disease transmission into the human population.

While we appreciate the difficulty in assigning tasks during a pandemic, the lack of previous inspections and mounting evidence of mink farms as potential danger zones warrants special consideration.

We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Lesley Fox
Executive Director
The Fur-Bearers

CC: Media outlets