

RETAIL

Could New York be next US city to ban fur?

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Michael Kors has stopped using real fur. Image credit: Michael Kors

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Proposed legislation in New York would ban the sale of animal furs, as the movement reaches the fashion capital of the United States.

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State and city lawmakers have introduced anti-fur legislation that would ban the manufacturing and sale of animal pelts or apparel. In recent years, luxury labels have been more public about eliminating or reducing their use of real animal furs as consumers become more interested in sustainable fashion.

Anti-fur moves

Earlier this March, New York State Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal formally proposed a statewide ban of fur sales. If passed, this legislation would go into effect in 2021.

Whether Ms. Rosenthal's proposal gains traction remains to be seen. In the meantime, New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson introduced his own anti-fur legislation.

The proposed law would ban the sale of fur apparel within city limits. Mr. Johnson represents Manhattan's famed Garment District.



Both small and luxury businesses sell real animal fur products. Image credit: Fur Information Council of America

"There are hundreds of fur businesses in New York City including more than 100 family-owned fur businesses in Speaker Johnson's district," the Fur Information Council of America said in an official statement. "His bill will shutter a thriving industry with good-paying middle-class jobs for more than a 1,000 New York City residents."

The U.S. was estimated to manufacture more than \$352 billion in fur apparel and clothing accessories in 2018 for an increase of 4 percent since 2014, according to [Euromonitor](#).

Critics of fur bans, such as mink farming organization Fur Commission USA, also point to a removal of consumer choice.

There is recent precedent for citywide fur bans.

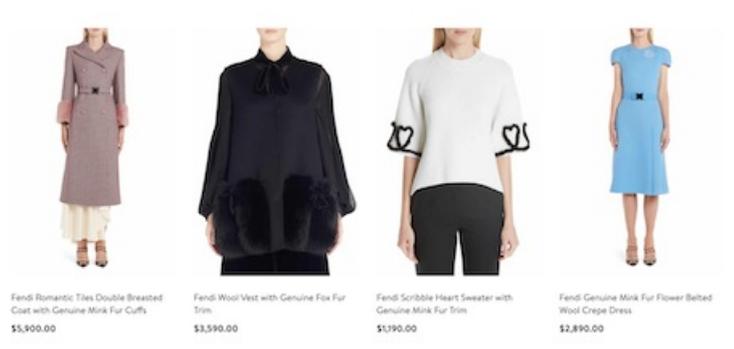
San Francisco's ban of fur sales went into effect on Jan. 1, 2019, though retailers have another year to sell any existing clothing or accessories that contain real fur.

A similar ordinance in Los Angeles is scheduled to go into effect in 2021. Sales of used furs at secondhand shops will still be permissible, among other exceptions, according to [The Los Angeles Times](#).

Two other California cities, Berkeley and West Hollywood, have also prohibited sales of fur products on a local level.

"These compassionate and commonsense bills for animals set an amazing precedent for other states to follow and send a strong message that communities simply won't tolerate profiting from animal cruelty any longer," said Rebecca Gerber, senior director of engagement at [Care2](#), Redwood City, CA.

Some consumers and activists, however, do not intend to wait for the legislative process to play out.



Fendi is one of the luxury fashion labels that still retails fur. Image credit: Nordstrom

As of press time, more than 77,000 consumers have signed an online petition from Care2 requesting that department store brands Bloomingdales, Nordstrom and Barneys New York stop selling fur products.

British department store chain Selfridges banned the sale of real fur in 2005, while online retail company Yoox Net-A-Porter Group ceased the sale of all merchandise containing animal fur on its multi-brand sites ([see story](#)).

Fur-free fashions

Burberry, Gucci, Armani, Michael Kors and Jimmy Choo are among the luxury brands that have moved away from using real furs in their designs and products. Labels including Bottega Veneta, Chanel and Furla have also rejected fur and are experimenting with alternative materials ([see story](#)).

As more luxury brands commit to going fur-free, exotic leathers such as crocodile, alligator, lizard and python appear to be the next materials to be evaluated.

Selfridges has announced its plans to stop selling items made with exotic skins within the next year. The retailer is currently phasing out materials such as crocodile, alligator, lizard and python, and plans to only sell agricultural leather by February 2020 ([see story](#)).

"Customers have been clear that they want the products and companies in their lives to prioritize kindness to animals, workers and the environment," Care2's Ms. Gerber said.