UK poised to drop planned ban on fur imports

By Sandra Halliday - 21 February 2022

The UK’s plan to ban fur imports could be abandoned as some members of the Government signal their opposition on grounds of consumer choice.

Reports said several cabinet ministers have concerns about the new rules that would have formed part of the Animals Abroad Bill. And while the final decision hasn’t been taken, it looks likely that their views will win out in order to allow the rest of the bill to proceed.

A Government spokesperson said it remains committed “to upholding its world-leading standards in animal welfare”.

The fur strategy reversal is also likely to be accompanied by the continuation of foie gras imports that were also originally set to be banned.

Fur farming has been illegal in the UK since the early years of the century, something welcomed by animal rights campaigners. But with the country still importing fur farmed abroad — £800 million+ in almost two decades and some of it produced in worse conditions than had been seen in the UK industry — there has long been frustration that the overall policy hasn’t been animal-friendly.

The Animals Abroad Bill has been delayed as debate around its enforcement has gone on. Brexit Opportunities Minister Jacob Rees-Mogg has been called out as one raising objections over the restriction of consumer choice.

However, that attitude would seem to go against consumer trends and a Yonder poll last year showed that 93% of Britons won’t wear fur and 72% want a ban on fur sales.

Claire Bass, executive director for Humane Society International/UK, said: “Polls show that [Britons] want a fur
Claire Bass, executive director for Humane Society International/UK, said: "Polls show that [Britons] want a fur ban, and over 140 MPs from all parties agree that we should not remain complicit in the death and suffering of millions of animals caged or trapped overseas for frivolous fashion. Last year there were 30,000 responses to the Government’s Call for Evidence on the fur trade, we are calling for the results to be published. This evidence should determine government policy, not the personal preferences and hunches of a small number of influential Conservatives."

The #FurFreeBritain campaign has received support from over 50 British celebrities, as well as from designers such as Stella McCartney, Vivienne Westwood DBE and Katharine Hamnett.

It comes as more designers who previously used fur agree to go fur-free with Dolce & Gabbana being the latest.

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