

DEFENDERS OF ANIMALS, INC.

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Against House Bill No. 7562

April 1, 2024

**House Environment &
Natural Resources Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903**

Dear Committee Member:

On behalf of our members, supporters, and board members, I am respectfully requesting that you vote against House Bill H-7562 by Noret, Marszalkowski, Bennett, Kazarian, Craven, Caldwell, Cotter, Chippendale, Spears, and Costantino that would delete subsection (b) of this section which lists the furbearing mammals in the state and requires DEM to promulgate by rule, a list of "furbearers" for this chapter.

In the past, the RI General Assembly had a reason to support this section; namely, to protect furbearers like the river otter.

The removal of Section B of 20-16-1. Furbearers protected would take away the protection of the river otter, along with a host of other fur-bearing animals.

This bill gives the RI Department of Environmental Management a carte blanche to decide the fate of all the fur-bearing animals in Rhode Island and will result in those animals to hunted and trapped.

Over the years, there were many state legislators and individuals that testified at hearings that felt that the need for Section B of 20-16-1 was needed and important for Rhode Island's eco system.

This Committee should consider the necessity to keep those protections in place. You can do that by voting against Bill H-7562.

There is simply no justification to remove Section B from Section other than appeasing the wishes of hunters and trappers.

There have been previous bills relating to removing protection from fur-bearing animals such as the river otter (genus Lutra) and those bills failed.

We should not be cowering to the desires of hunters and trappers to kill more wildlife in our state.

There is no danger in allowing protected fur-bearing animals to live and no danger to the public in continuing those protections.

On behalf of Rhode Island members and supporters of Defenders of Animals, Inc., I am asking you to reject Bill H- 7562 and leave Section (B) alone.

Sincerely,

Dennis Tabella

**Dennis Tabella
Director**