

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF INTRO 1476 – Ban Sale of Fur in NYC

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To: Consumer Affairs Committee and City Council member, Jimmy Van Bramer.

I am Sugandh Agrawal, founder and CEO of Gunas New York. Since 2009, Gunas is a brand committed to making luxury, vegan and cruelty-free handbags for the modern, style conscious and fashion forward woman. The brand has been awarded the Best Green Handbag label from Instyle magazine, Best Retail bag from Macy's and Best Vegan Handbag brand from PETA. You will also find the products featured in Vogue magazine, Harper's Bazaar, Let's Make a Deal -TV show, A Girl Friend's Guide to Divorce on CBS and A series of Unfortunate Events on Netflix. I'm here today to testify in support for the ban on the sale of fur in New York City. I have primarily three strong arguments in support of this.

1. **Plastics are a genius human invention:** Unlike plastic straws and bottles that are a convenience tool and can easily be avoided, faux fur and faux leather are a genius use of plastics. Using plastics as faux fur is an adaptation of nature, a way to mimic its beauty instead of destroying it. Several innovations in the form of fur made from hemp fibers, corn based plastic and even plastic made from avocado seeds are now being developed by scientists all over the world. Let's not be a creature of habit, rather an evangelist of change; a change that is the need of the hour. Let's stop the abuse of animals in the name of fashion.
2. **Ethical jobs will be created:** There comes a time when an industry no longer serves the purpose of humankind. We are at this crossroads with the fur industry. Instead of fearing change we need to embrace it, innovate and give our future generations what they really want. There is a clear, growing demand for animal-free products. As a small business owner, the success of my brand is a clear indication that the Millennial and Gen Z consumers want this change. We want to have nothing to do with garments made from brutality. No amount of regulations in the fur industry can justify the torture, abuse and pain we inflict upon animals.
3. **Designers do NOT support the use of fur in fashion:** Household fashion brands such as Gucci, Versace, Burberry, Michael Kors, Armani, DVF, Tom Ford, Stella McCartney, Vivien Westwood, DKNY, Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein have all dropped fur from their collections. London Fashion Week, vowed to go fur free in 2018. New York is one of the top 4 world capitals for fashion. What values do we want to stand for?

Torture cannot be labeled as aesthetically, morally or visually pleasing. Animal abuse is modern day slavery. Let's liberate them by creating incentives similar to those embraced by several other green initiatives in our city. Every time we've embraced such a change we've emerged happier and stronger. As a mom, this is the kind of world I want for my child. As a business owner, I know it can be done.

Thank you,  
Sugandh Goel Agrawal