

Dear Ms. Guo Pei:

On behalf of Humane Society International and The Humane Society of the United States, I am writing to thank you for making the compassionate decision not to use seal fur in your designs.

As a renowned designer and leader in the fashion industry, you play a key role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Your decision not to use seal fur is sending a clear message to the public and to the Canadian sealing industry – that China will not facilitate the globally condemned slaughter of baby seals for their fur.

There are so many good reasons to say no to seal products.

Canada's commercial seal hunt is the largest slaughter of marine mammals on earth, with up to 360,000 baby seals killed annually. Ninety-seven percent of the seals killed are defenseless babies just days or weeks of age. Many have yet to take their first swim or eat their first solid meal when they are killed.

Each year, observers report severe suffering at the slaughter, including pups impaled on metal hooks and sliced open while conscious. Recent reports note a widespread failure by sealers to observe the regulations, and by authorities to enforce the law. Veterinarians say the commercial seal hunt is inherently inhumane and should be ended as a result.

Conservationists are also calling for the slaughter to stop. Harp seals are ice dependent animals, and rely on sea ice to give birth to and nurse their pups. Climate change is fast destroying their sea ice habitat and, in recent years, the Canadian government has reported up to 100 percent mortality in pups born in key birthing areas when the ice melted too early in the season. While we can't stop the impacts of climate change in the near term, we can end the commercial seal slaughter.

Seals are killed in the Canadian seal hunt for their fur, for use in the fashion industry. Because most Canadians oppose the seal hunt, the industry relies on international markets to sell its products. But Canada's largest trading partner, the United States, banned seal product trade in 1972. Then last year, the European Union prohibited its trade in products from commercial seal hunts. Now, the Canadian sealing industry is attempting to use China as a dumping ground for its products of cruelty that the rest of the world has rejected.

By taking your compassionate stand, you are making clear that people in China are not prepared to facilitate this cruel slaughter. For that, and for your progressive approach to animal welfare in fashion, we are truly grateful.

Sincerely,

Kitty Block
Vice President
Humane Society International