



May 11, 2020

Dear Owner/Manager,

On behalf of the Center for a Humane Economy (the Center), a nonprofit organization dedicated to working with businesses to advance the welfare of animals, I write to remind you of California's explicit ban on the sale of kangaroo skin products, including "K-leather" soccer cleats.

California Penal Code § 653o makes it illegal to sell kangaroo-derived products in California. This ban went into effect in 1971 but was temporarily lifted from 2007 to 2015, after a successful lobbying campaign by Australia's government and commercial kangaroo industry. However, on January 1, 2016 the law's moratorium ended and selling kangaroo products became strictly forbidden again.

California Penal Code § 653o states,¹ "It is unlawful to import into this state for commercial purposes, to possess with intent to sell, or to sell within the state, the dead body, or any part or product thereof, of a...kangaroo." For violating this statute, "[a] person...is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be subject to a fine of not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or imprisonment in the county jail not to exceed six months, or both that fine and imprisonment, for each violation."

As an attorney for the Center, I am providing this information to soccer store owners in California to help increase compliance with this law. I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

The Center is preparing a *Directory of California Soccer Cleat Retailers*, listing stores that do not sell soccer cleats made of kangaroo and those continuing to sell K-leather cleats. **Would your business please complete the survey found at www.cleatsurvey.com**, or use the included paper version? By publicizing this Directory to soccer players, animal welfare advocates, the public and the media, we hope to boost the profile of retailers showing diligence with the law.

We have also developed a list the of most commonly available soccer cleats containing kangaroo skin that, if sold in the state, violate California Penal Code § 653o. We are distributing this list to Californians, hoping it too will influence the purchasing decisions of soccer cleat consumers.

For several months we have been investigating soccer stores, sporting goods chains, online retailers, and cleat manufacturers conducting business in California. While there is considerable compliance with the law, K-leather cleats remain readily available. We believe further progress can be made by simply increasing awareness of the law to store owners, cleat buyers, and enforcement agencies.

The suspension of in-store business during the current COVID-19 pandemic provides you with an opportunity to reorganize your inventory and remove any contraband from your stores.

¹ Complete statute can be found at www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov

Our recently published white paper *The Moral Fiber of Athletic Footwear* examines the trend away from animal leather and toward superior synthetic materials. Our Report illustrates how the demand for kangaroo skin drives the killing of two million kangaroos every year in Australia, constituting the largest commercial wildlife slaughter of mammals in the world. The Report can be found online at www.cleatsurvey.com, along with the survey.

Please contact me with any questions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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