

stated: "...animal rights is a wealthy growth industry. An international organization, the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), has over 500,000 members and a net income of over \$6 million a year within the U.S. alone. Greenpeace, with about the same membership, has an income in the neighbourhood of \$7 million." Throughout their history of contact with non-aboriginal people, aboriginal people have had to deal with the devastating spiritual, cultural and socio-economic consequences of past attempts to impose foreign values on them.

Many of the arguments of the animal rights movement attack the cultural legitimacy of trapping as an aspect of aboriginal cultures and are based on numerous misconceptions about the role of fur trapping in aboriginal cultures. For example, animal rights activists argue that fur trapping is not a valid part of aboriginal culture because it is assumed to be profit motivated and because it was introduced by Europeans; that the economic hardship resulting from destruction of the fur industry can be simply replaced by "economic development"; that aboriginal culture is dead or beyond hope of revival and that if aboriginal people were simply provided an opportunity to enter the wage economy, they would abandon fur trapping and other hunting related activities; that aboriginal culture is defined by its content and practise in pre-contact periods and that to the extent aboriginal cultures deviate from this historical model, they are no longer truly aboriginal. The Fur Issue Report has helped in the effort of aboriginal organizations to dispel such misconceptions and to explain the fundamental cultural importance of hunting and trapping activities, but the controversy has continued to escalate.

Cultures, by definition, and human beings, by nature, are dynamic and ever changing. Aboriginal people can no more be expected to conform to some historical picture of what aboriginal culture is, than European cultures can be exclusively defined by their content in the 17th and 18th centuries. The adoption by aboriginal people of fur trapping into their hunting economy was a practical and normal part of their adaptation to new circumstances thrust upon them. Further, aboriginal people have found trapping to be consistent with their spiritual values requiring respect for animal life. The contents of aboriginal cultures and specifically, the cultural legitimacy or relevancy of trapping, is determined by those cultures. The right to define the content of one's own culture is an aspect of