

SB690.pdf

Uploaded by: Beth Wiseman

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB 690
Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production -
Prohibitions

If one were to see the conditions egg-laying hens are kept in commercial egg production, one would never eat an egg again. I don't; I eat cage-free expensive eggs. Yes, they are expensive, but I have to live with my conscience.

We have many new Senators. Let's set an example and lead the way for humane conditions for hens. Please give this Bill a favorable vote.

Thank you.

Beth Wiseman
410-484-6866
bwiseman84@hotmail.com

MD SB 690 Favorable Cheryl Leahy.pdf

Uploaded by: Cheryl Leahy

Position: FAV

AnimalOutlook

Exposing Truth. Inspiring Change.

Bill: SB 690
Committee: Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee
Position: Support
Date: March 2, 2023

My name is Cheryl Leahy, and I am Executive Director of Animal Outlook (AO), a nonprofit animal protection organization with a home base here in Maryland. I am testifying in support of SB 690 for many of the same reasons you will hear others present: battery cages are inhumane to animals and also present food safety and public health risks. What I believe I can uniquely offer today is a specific factual look at the realities of battery cage production, including here in Maryland.

AO has conducted multiple investigations of battery egg facilities in Maryland.

- In 2001, numerous occasions in 2002, 2003, and then again in 2005, AO entered Maryland battery cage egg facilities where hundreds of thousands of birds are warehoused. AO documented the following repeatedly across these investigations:
 - Hens crowded in barren wire cages, restricting even simple movements
 - Animals in the lower rows of cages forced to live in the excrement of birds above them
 - Severe and widespread feather loss
 - Birds with severe and untreated illness and injuries deprived of veterinary care, including multiple disfiguring swollen and infected eyes.
 - Birds trapped in the bars of their cages or under other birds, immobilized and unable to access food or water
 - Widespread dead birds, with live birds forced to live in cages with their decomposing cage mates

While I have highlighted the Maryland egg industry, AO's investigations of other battery cage egg facilities reveal almost identical conditions and issues.

- In 2005, 2007, and 2009, AO investigated battery egg facilities in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Minnesota, and documented:
 - Once again, the same kind of overcrowding in cages, severely decomposed birds with live birds in cages, sick and injured birds with no veterinary care, feces landing on animals, stuck birds with no access to food and water, and escaped or abandoned birds in the manure pits or aisles.

- Each worker being responsible for between 125,000 and 225,000 birds, with one worker saying they could spend no more than an hour per house looking for dead birds

When it comes to battery cages, cruelty and suffering is the rule, not the exception.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cheryl Leahy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cheryl Leahy

Executive Director

P: 773.259.7760

Appendix: Select photos



ISE Cecilton, MD: Bird is seen with a severely swollen and infected eye



ISE Cecilton, MD: birds crowded in a battery cage with severe feather loss

SB690_Favorable_HSUS.pdf

Uploaded by: Chris Holbein

Position: FAV



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

1255 23rd St. NW
Suite 450
Washington, DC 20037
P 202-452-1100
F 202-778-6132
humanesociety.org

March 2, 2023

Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Charles A. Laue
Chair

Brad Jakeman
Vice Chair

Kitty Block
*Chief Executive Officer
and President*

William H. Hall
*Treasurer and
Chief Financial Officer*

Angela Ciccolo
*General Counsel
and Chief Legal Officer*

Alison Corcoran
*Chief Development
and Marketing Officer*

Erin Frackleton
Chief Operating Officer

Marshall Taylor
Chief People Officer

Nicole Paquette
*Chief Program
and Policy Officer*

Miguel Abi-hassan
*Chief Animal Rescue, Care
and Sanctuary Officer*

Sara Amundson
*Chief Government
Relations Officer*

Jeffrey Flocken
Chief International Officer

Johanie V. Parra
Secretary

DIRECTORS

Susan Atherton
Yolanda Berkowitz
Georgina Bloomberg
J. Elizabeth Bradham
Marcus East
Carolyn N. Everson
Caren M. Fleit
Robert A. Greenspon
Brad Jakeman
Cathy Kangas
Sylvia T. Kaser, Esq
Adi Kumar
Charles A. Laue
C. Thomas McMillen
David S. Niekerk
Thomas J. Sabatino, Jr.
Suzy Welch

RE: Strong support for SB690

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the committee: The Maryland-based Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), on behalf of our thousands of supporters across the state, thank Senator Lewis Young for introducing SB690. Eggs in Maryland should be safer, more affordable and more humanely produced. SB690 will make safer foods more affordable for Maryland residents, and we wholeheartedly support the passage of this measure.

On many egg factory farms, hens are crammed into cages so small the birds can't spread their wings. Each bird is given less space than the dimensions of an iPad on which to live her entire life. She's forced to eat, sleep, and defecate in the same space and is denied almost everything that is natural to her. These conditions are cruel to the animals and increase the spread of diseases, like salmonella, which can then sicken people. Extensive research shows that locking hens in cages increases the risk of Salmonella contamination, a bacteria that can be lethal, especially in children and the elderly.

SB690 codifies where the market is already going. More than 200 of the country's largest food companies have committed to switching to a 100 percent cage-free egg supply. This includes Burger King, Unilever, General Mills, Aramark, Costco, and Target, along with Maryland-based Sodexo and Marriott. Almost all of these companies are going to get to cage-free before the 2025 deadline proposed in SB690.

Currently, retailers charge a premium for cage-free eggs. Because of this artificial premium, lower income Maryland residents have a harder time purchasing cage-free eggs. Since cage-free eggs will become the new standard under SB690, that artificial premium will go away. Retailers will market cage-free as their "value" egg to draw customer foot traffic, just like they do today with eggs from caged hens. So, SB690 will give more access to safer food for Maryland families.

[Egg industry data](#) and consumer data shows that egg prices in California—which has a nearly identical law prohibiting the sale of eggs from hens in



cages—changed by less than a penny per egg once the law was implemented. In addition, the hidden costs of such inhumane confinement are increased cruelty and food safety risks. It's animals and consumers who are currently paying those hidden prices.

The current price disruptions in the egg market are largely due to a national bird flu outbreak and higher feed and energy costs, not cage-free egg laws. [According to the USDA](#), more than 40 million chickens have been killed because of the current outbreak of avian flu. While the latest outbreak of avian flu has been disastrous, Maryland residents shouldn't have to wait indefinitely to gain better access to safer eggs that also align with their values.

SB690 is in line with laws enacted in other states. Over the past several years, red, blue and purple states have passed similar measures, like California, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Arizona. Utah and Rhode Island have also passed cage-free egg standards. These measures all garnered strong bipartisan support.

In addition to aligning with other states, SB690 is farmer-friendly by providing market and regulatory certainty. The bill contains the egg industry's own cage-free standards. The United Egg Producers' modest guidelines on cage-free systems allow hens to perform important natural behaviors like flapping their wings, walking, perching, dustbathing and laying eggs in nest boxes. SB690 is based on these guidelines. It also contains an exemption for small and family farmers with flocks fewer than 3,000 birds. Additionally, the bill only applies to egg-laying hens, not broiler chickens (i.e., birds who are used for their meat). So, it wouldn't impact Perdue or any other broiler producer.

By ensuring better welfare standards for birds, this bill will make safer food more affordable for Maryland families. Maryland has consistently been a leader in protecting animals from abuse and in promoting ethical business practices, and SB690 fits perfectly with that tradition.

For the foregoing reasons, we kindly urge you to vote yes on SB690.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel
Maryland State Director
The Humane Society of the United States

SB690_Favorable_AmericansForFamilyFarmers.pdf

Uploaded by: Donna Krudwig

Position: FAV

SB690: FAVORABLE

March 2, 2023

Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401



Dear members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

We are Maryland family farmers writing in strong support of SB690, which will provide more humane eggs for Marylanders. This measure would provide spatial standards for egg-laying hens in our state, which give the birds enough room to move and express natural behaviors. It would also ensure that eggs sold in our state come from facilities that are held to these same standards. On some industrial production facilities, egg-laying hens are confined in cages so small they're rendered virtually immobile for their whole lives. This confinement can undercut responsible family farmers who use more humane means of raising animals. Moreover, workers at these corporate facilities often report that witnessing such cruel conditions takes an emotional toll on them.

SB690 is a commonsense bill that's in line with how animals ought to be treated. We are concerned about animal welfare, the viability of family farms and the reputation of Maryland agriculture, and therefore kindly urge your support of SB690.

Sincerely,

Honey Moon Farm - Accident

Diehl's Produce - Annapolis

Olmo Bros Nursery & Farm - Annapolis

Tanglewood Sheep and Goat Farm - Ashton

Hybridoma Organic Fruit Farm - Baldwin

Butterbee Farm - Baltimore

Serenity Farm - Benedict

Goat Plum Tree Farm - Berlin

Belle Prairie Farm - Big Pool

Foxhound Farm - Bishopville

Provident Organic Farm - Bivalve

Contentment Farm - Boonsboro

Cherry Glen Farm - Boyds

Windy Way Farm - Boyds

Peaceful Acres Farm - Brandywine

Bella Vita Farm - Brookeville

DoDo Farms - Brookeville

Victory Chapel Family Farms - Bryans Road

Anchorage Farm - Centreville

Land's End Farm - Centreville

Where Pigs Fly Farm - Centreville

Redman Farms - Chestertown

Oksana's Produce - Chestertown

Natural Nick's Produce - Chillum Gardens

The Hydrofarm Inc. - Churchville

Rebecca's Garden - Columbia

Rumbleway Farm - Conowingo

Bob's Organic Farm - Cordova

Environmental Evergreens - Darlington

Chicken of the Woods Farm - Darnestown

Query Mill Hill Farm - Darnestown

Mt Airy U-Pick Farm - Davidsonville

P & J Tree Farm - Delmar

Amaranth Acres - Dickerson

Monocacy Mills - Dickerson

One Acre Farm - Dickerson

A. H. Herb'n Craft Farm - Easton

Cottingham Farm - Easton

Olney Farm - Elkridge

Eder Farm - Elkton

Donna Krudwig, President

AmericansForFamilyFarmers.com

Donna@AmericansForFamilyFarmers.com

SB690: FAVORABLE

Stone Wall Angus - Fairplay	Next Step Produce - Newburg
Belvedere Farm - Fallston	Haley Farm - Oakland
Three Oaks Farm - Forest Hill	The Farm at Glen Mary - Park Hall
Harford Vineyard - Forest Hill	Grandma's Farm - Pleasant Valley
Ambling Brook Farm - Frederick	Leafcutter Farm - Point of Rocks
Sycamore Spring Farm - Frederick	Grateful Gardeners - Poolesville
Oak Spring Farm - Freeland	Plow and Stars Farm - Poolesville
Heartwood Farm - Friendsville	Scrivener's Farm - Prince Frederick
Two Story Chimney Ciderworks - Gaithersburg	Brightman Farm - Princess Anne
Hideaway Farm - Gambrills	Crooked Creek Farm - Pylesville
Prigel Family Creamery - Glen Arm	Piece of Heaven Farm - Reisterstown
Fat & Happy Farms - Grasonville	Farm To Fork Farm - Ridgely
Kinohi Poultry - Greensboro	Brewers Hideaway Farm - Rising Sun
Third Way Farm - Havre de Grace	Windy Ridge Acres - Rocky Ridge
Earth First Farm - Highland	Maple Vale Farm - Rohrerstown
Fox Briar Farm - Hurlock	growingSOUL - Sandy Spring
Red Top Farm - Jarrettsville	Willow Oak Flower & Herb Farm - Severn
Castle Hill Farm - Jefferson	Springfield Farm - Sparks
Fox Haven Organic Farm - Jefferson	Carriage House Farms - Stevenson
Blue-Ridge Farm - Keedysville	Prosperity Acres - Sunderland
Lonesome Pine Farms - Knoxville	Ritter Farm - Sykesville
Hancock Farm - La Plata	Crossroads Multi-Farm CSA - Takoma Park
Gorman Farm - Laurel	Ridgeton Farms - Taylors Island
Our Graystone Farm - Laytonsville	Utica Bridge Farms - Thurmont
Part Green Hill Farm - Leonardtown	Gingersnap Farm - Trappe
R & H Farms - Lexington Park	Flying Pigs Farm - Union Bridge
Berry Daze Farm - Lothian	Grazy Days Family Farm - Union Bridge
Buppert's Farm - Marriottsville	Deep Roots Farm - Upper Marlboro
Scarborough Farm - Mechanicsville	Heron There Farm - Upper Marlboro
Chocolates and Tomatoes Farm - Middletown	Owl's Nest Farm - Upper Marlboro
Harley Farm - Middletown	Chestnut Creek Farm - Westminster
Millersville Hens - Millersville	Faithful Friends Farm - Westminster
Karma Farm - Monkton	Lucky Lane Farm - White Hall
Maryland Microgreens - Monrovia	Star Bright Farm - White Hall
Elk Run Winery - Mount Airy	Stewart Farms - Woodbine
FrogHollow Homestead - Myersville	Breezy Willow Farm - Woodbine
Lovell Grass Fed Co. - New Windsor	Withers Wool - Woodbine
Shepherds Manor Creamery - New Windsor	Moon Valley Farm - Woodsboro

SB0690 Testimony - Favorable - James Fremont - 3-1

Uploaded by: James Fremont

Position: FAV

March 1, 2023

To: The Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

The following testimony is in support of SB0690, which will require all eggs produced and sold in Maryland to meet the industry's own cage-free standards to improve quality of life for over 5 million egg-laying hens every year--hens now often suffering in cages so confining that they can't move or spread their wings.

I have a personal interest in this bill because for 16 years I have volunteered at Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary in Montgomery County, a sanctuary that offers exemplary care and a forever home for relinquished, rescued, and formerly abused farm animals, including chickens. I have learned that chickens are much like humans in that they form and enjoy friendships among themselves. The sanctuary chickens are not confined to cages, and I witness their joy in being able to explore the chicken yard, scratch for bugs, and generally enjoy life the way chickens are meant to.

Chickens can carry Salmonella, and a European Food Safety Authority study found that there were significantly higher Salmonella rates found in operations that confine hens in cages, so approving this bill would also promote food safety.

Please do the humane thing and join Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and seven other states which have enacted similar legislation. Improve the lives of these sentient beings, and help protect the public health, by approving this bill.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration.

James Fremont
2421 Evans Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20902-4938
jimfremont@earthlink.net
240-393-8425

FAQ Maryland Cage-Free Egg Bill.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Position: FAV

Frequently Asked Questions about SB690

How will SB690 help Marylanders have access to safer, affordable, more humane eggs?

On many egg factory farms, hens are crammed into cages so small the birds can't spread their wings. Each bird is given less space than the dimensions of an iPad on which to live her entire life. She's forced to eat, sleep, and defecate in the same space and is denied almost everything that is natural to her. These conditions are cruel to the animals and increase the spread of diseases, like Salmonella, which can then sicken people.

Retailers often charge an artificial premium for a dozen cage-free eggs. Because of this artificial premium, lower income Maryland residents have a harder time purchasing cage-free eggs. Since cage-free eggs will become the new standard under SB690, that artificial premium will go away. Retailers will market cage-free as their "value" egg to draw customer foot traffic, just like they do today with eggs from caged hens. So, this bill will give more access to safer food for Maryland families.

How will SB690 impact the cost of eggs?

For shifting to cage-free production, estimates vary between less than one cent to a few pennies per egg. In fact, when McDonald's announced it was going cage-free, it stated it won't raise prices at all. More than 200 of the country's largest food companies have committed to switching to a 100 percent cage-free egg supply. This includes Burger King, Costco, Unilever, General Mills and Aramark, along with Maryland-based Sodexo and Marriott.

What are the food safety and public health risks of caging birds?

Extensive research¹ shows that locking hens in cages increases the risk of Salmonella contamination, a bacteria that can be lethal, especially in children and the elderly. Leading consumer advocacy organizations including the Center for Science in the Public Interest and Center for Food Safety have supported cage-free reforms.

Is SB690 in line with cage-free legislation in other states?

SB690 aligns with other states. Over the past several years, red, blue and purple states have passed similar measures, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Michigan, and Massachusetts. Utah and Rhode Island have also passed cage-free egg standards. These measures all garnered strong bipartisan support.

How is SB690 farmer-friendly?

SB690 contains the egg industry's own cage-free standards. The United Egg Producers' modest guidelines on cage-free systems allow hens to perform important natural behaviors like flapping their wings, walking, perching, dustbathing and laying eggs in nest boxes. SB690 is based on these guidelines.

SB690 is farmer-friendly by providing market and regulatory certainty. It also contains an exemption for small and family farmers with flocks fewer than 3,000 birds. Additionally, the bill only applies to egg-laying hens, not broiler chickens (i.e., birds who are used for their meat).

How do cages compare with cage-free facilities?

Welfare aspects of housing systems for hens		
	Barren Battery Cage	Cage-Free Barn/Aviary
Typical space per bird	67 in	144-216 in
Walking	Constrained	Free expression
Running	Not permitted	Free expression
Jumping	Not permitted	Free expression
Flying	Not permitted	Free expression
Perching	Not permitted	Free expression
Exploratory behavior	Not permitted	Free expression
Dustbathing	Not permitted	Free expression
Foraging	Not permitted	Free expression
Nesting	Not permitted	Free expression
Exercise	Not permitted	Free expression
Group size	Smallest	Large
Air quality	Variable and dependent on management	Variable and dependent on management
Bone strength	Weak	Strong
Bone fractures	Less common during laying, but more common when removed from cages at depopulation	Common during the laying period, but less common during depopulation
Fatty liver hemorrhagic syndrome	More common	Less common
Fear	More fearful	Less fearful
Trapping injury	More potential	Less potential
Mortality	Variable and dependent on strain and beak trimming status	Variable and dependent on strain and beak trimming status

*chart compiled by the Humane Society's lead scientist

¹ See: D. R. Jones, J. Guard, R. K. Gast, R. J. Buhr, P. J. Fedorka-Cray, Z. Abdo, J. R. Plumblee, D. V. Bourassa, N. A. Cox, L. L. Rigsby, C. I. Robison, P. Regmi, and D. M. Karcher. 2016. Influence of commercial laying hen housing systems on the incidence and identification of Salmonella and Campylobacter. Poultry Science 95:1116-1124; De Vylder, J., S. Van Hoorebeke, R. Ducatelle, F. Pasmans, F. Haesebrouck, J. Dewulf, and F. Van Immerseel. 2009. Effect of the housing system on shedding and colonization of gut and internal organs of laying hens with Salmonella Enteritidis. Poult. Sci. 88:2491-2495; Denagamage, Thomas; Bhushan Jayarao, Paul Patterson, Eva Wallner-Pendleton, and Subhashinie Kariyawasam. 2015. Risk factors associated with salmonella in laying hen farms: systematic review of observational studies. Avian Diseases 59(2):291-302.

Maryland Voters Support Cage-Free Eggs.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Position: FAV

Methodology

From February 6th to 16th, YouGov Blue surveyed 531 registered Maryland voters on behalf of the Humane Society of the United States via the YouGov web panel. The sample was weighted according to gender, age, race, education, Census region, and 2020 Presidential vote choice. Respondents were selected from YouGov's panel to be representative of registered voters.

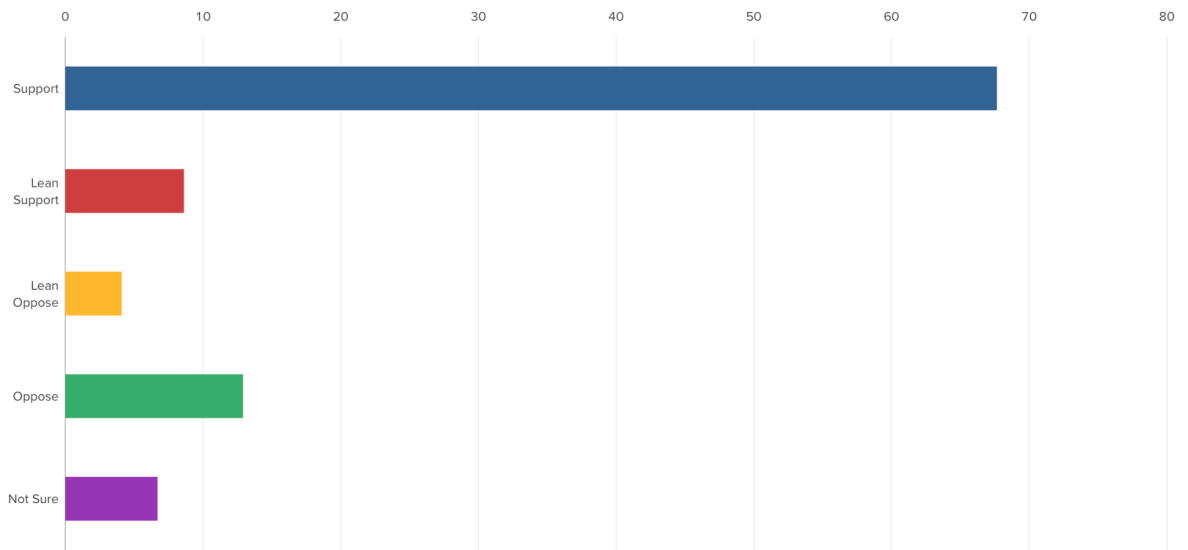
Toplines

- Seventy-six percent of Maryland voters support their legislators voting in favor of the cage-free egg legislation currently being considered by the Maryland legislature while only 17 percent oppose the legislation.
- Seventy-eight percent of voters support the Governor signing cage-free egg legislation if it passes the legislature, with 16 percent opposed.
- The cage-free egg legislation has strong support from voters across parties, with 84 percent of Democrats, 60 percent of Republicans and 71 percent of Independents in support of their legislator voting in favor of the proposal. Eighty-six percent of Democrats, 61 percent of Republicans and 75 percent of Independents support the Governor signing the legislation if the legislature passes it.
- After hearing arguments for and against the cage-free egg proposal, support remains strong, with 72 percent in support and 20 percent opposed to passage in the legislature and 77 percent in support of the Governor signing the legislation and 17 percent opposed.

Cage-Free Egg Proposal Enjoys Strong Support From Voters

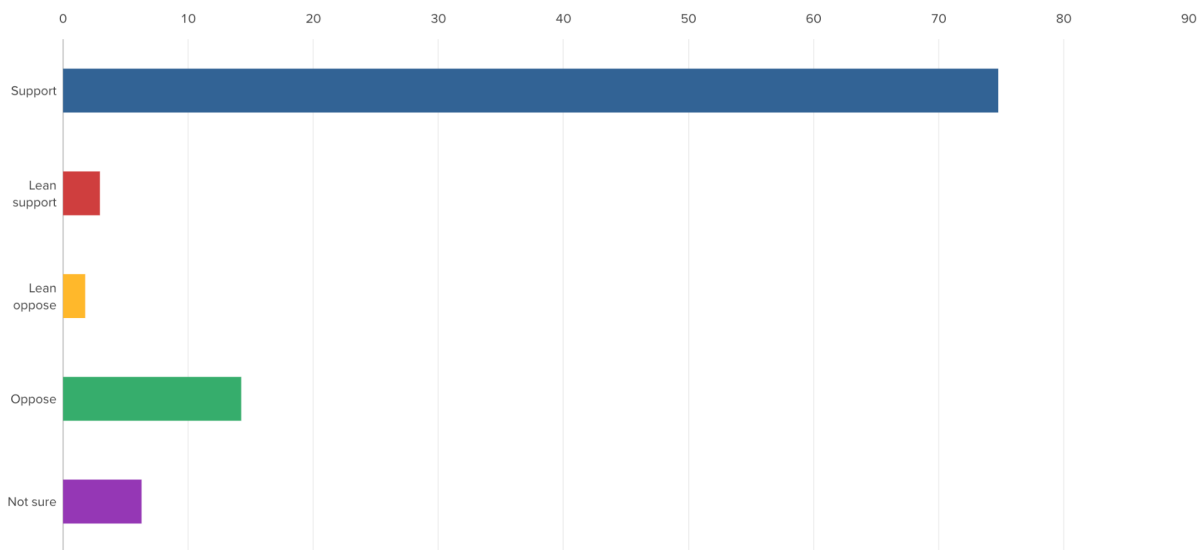
We find strong support among Maryland voters for the cage-free egg legislation. **Seventy-six percent of Maryland voters support cage-free egg legislation, with 17 percent opposed.** In our initial ask, 68 percent of Maryland voters want their legislator to vote in favor of the legislation, while 13 percent want their legislator to vote against it. The other 19 percent are undecided, but among those voters, the plurality (44%) lean towards the legislation, with only 22 percent leaning against (leading to the final seventy-six, 17 percent split).

Do you support or oppose your legislator voting for cage-free egg legislation?



An even larger share of Maryland voters support the Governor signing the legislation into law if it passes the legislature. Seventy-eight percent of voters support the Governor signing cage-free egg legislation if it passes the legislature, with 16 percent opposed. On initial ask, 75 percent of voters supported the Governor signing the law and 14 percent were opposed, among the 11 percent unsure, 26 percent leaned towards signing the law and 18 percent leaned against. The rest chose not to lean in any direction.

Do you support or oppose the Governor signing cage-free egg legislation?



Cage-Free Egg Proposal Is Robust To Message Test

These results remain robust even when voters hear arguments for and against the policy. Two sets of arguments were tested, both available in the footnotes.¹ After hearing one of two message batteries² 72 percent of Maryland voters support their legislator voting for the legislation; 20 percent opposed and the rest were undecided. After hearing the same arguments, 77 percent support the Governor signing the law, compared with only 17 percent opposed.

Conclusion

The cage-free egg proposal currently being considered by the Maryland legislature enjoys strong support, even after voters hear arguments for and against the proposal.

¹**SPLIT 1:** Opponents of this legislation say it will increase the cost of eggs and destroy well-paying jobs in the egg industry. Supporters say that the current conditions in hen houses are cruel and pose food safety risk, endangering the health of customers.

SPLIT 2: Opponents of this legislation say it will increase the cost of eggs and destroy well-paying jobs in the egg industry. Supporters say that similar legislation has passed in nearly a dozen states without having a negative impact on customers.

² The differences between the two messages are small and primarily affect the percent in support, rather than opposed.

Two Page Factsheet - Maryland Cage-Free Egg Bill.p

Uploaded by: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Position: FAV

Support Bill SB690

Sponsored by Senator Lewis Young

Marylanders deserve safer, affordable, more humane eggs

Due to enormous public opposition to confining farm animals in ultra-restrictive cages, it's now clear that the future of egg production is cage-free. SB690 would ensure that after a phase-in period, eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free operations that adhere to the egg industry's own guidelines. This bill will promote food safety, advance animal welfare and provide a business-friendly regulatory framework.

Increases animal welfare and lowers food safety risks

The majority of hens in the United States egg industry are confined in barren cages so small they can't even flap their wings. These conditions are not only cruel for the birds, but cage systems have been associated with higher rates of Salmonella, a disease which can be deadly—especially in young children and the elderly. Evidence indicates that cage-free systems reduce Salmonella risks.

Reflects Maryland voters' support of cage-free legislation

A 2023 poll conducted by YouGov found that seventy-six percent of Maryland voters support their legislator voting in favor of the cage-free reforms contained in SB690.

Only impacts the layer industry

This measure does *not* impact any other sector of animal agriculture, such as Perdue or any other broiler chicken producer. SB690 also will not apply to small farmers with flocks of fewer than 3,000 birds.

Keeps costs down

The difference in production cost between cage and cage-free housing systems is minimal; it's estimated to be less than one cent to a few pennies per egg. Since cage-free eggs will become the norm, the cost of cage-free eggs will actually *decline* since grocery stores currently charge an artificial premium for these eggs.

Egg industry data shows that egg prices in California—which has a nearly identical law prohibiting the sale of eggs from hens in cages—changed by less than a penny per egg once the law was implemented. In addition, there are hidden costs from inhumane confinement - increased cruelty and food safety risks. It's animals and consumers who are currently paying those hidden prices.

Adopts industry-written standards

The guidelines written in SB690 for cage-free systems require between one and 1.5 square feet for birds depending on the specific system used. Maryland's more than 2 million egg-laying hens would be able to perform important natural behaviors like flapping their wings, walking, perching, dustbathing and laying eggs in nest boxes. The standards are based upon guidelines written by the United Egg Producers.

Reflects commercial egg-buyers' demand for change

This measure codifies where the market is already going. For example, Target, Costco, McDonald's, Burger King, Denny's, IHOP, Arby's, Panera Bread and Taco Bell all are either 100% cage-free or have a plan in place to reach 100% cage-free. Almost all of these companies are going to get to cage-free before or by SB690's 2025 deadline. So, this bill will keep Maryland farmers competitive in an evolving market.

Provides certainty and clear deadlines

While the market is definitely headed in the direction of cage-free, Maryland can improve the lives of 6 million hens per year by setting clear, enforceable deadlines for this change.

Typical cages used in the egg industry, where hens are virtually immobilized.



Commercial cage-free systems where hens have the ability to flap their wings, walk and perch.



012 SB690 Use of Battery Cages for Hen Eggs.pdf

Uploaded by: Karen Lewis Young

Position: FAV

KAREN LEWIS YOUNG
Legislative District 3
Frederick County

Committee on Education, Energy,
and the Environment



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 302
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3575 · 301-858-3575
800-492-7122 Ext. 3575
Karen.Young@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 1st, 2023

Support of SB 690 – Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg
Production - Prohibitions

The Honorable Brian Feldman

Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Maryland Senate

11 Bladen Street, Room 302

Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Esteemed Members of the Education, Energy, and
Environment Committee:

SB690 prohibits the use of battery cages for all eggs sold and produced in Maryland. These extreme cages are so small that birds can't spread their wings. Each bird is given less than the space of an iPad on which to live their entire life. They're forced to eat, sleep, and defecate in the same space and are denied almost everything that is natural to them. These conditions are cruel to the animals and increase the spread of diseases such as salmonella.

The bill requires that eggs produced and sold in Maryland meet the cage-free standards established by the industry itself. The United Egg Producers' common sense guidelines on cage-free systems allow hens to perform important natural behaviors like flapping their wings, walking, perching, dustbathing, and laying eggs in nest boxes. Maryland's cage-free egg bill is based on these guidelines, and follows the same structure that has passed in ten states (California, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Michigan, Massachusetts, Arizona, Utah, and Rhode Island) and has already been fully implemented in two (California and Massachusetts).

The question is no longer if the industry is going cage-free, but how to create a smooth transition for farmers and consumers while ensuring better animal welfare and food safety. More than 200 of the country's largest food companies have committed to switching to a 100 percent cage-free egg supply. This includes Burger King, Unilever, General Mills, Aramark, Costco, and Target. This is in addition to Maryland-based Sodexo and Marriott. This bill will keep Maryland farmers on track to meet demand while providing regulatory certainty and increasing access to

safer eggs for Maryland families. Small and family farmers with flocks of under 3,000 birds would be exempt from the new requirement.

Leading consumer advocacy organizations including the Center for Science in the Public Interest and Center for Food Safety have supported cage-free reforms. Extensive research shows that locking hens in cages increases the risk of salmonella contamination. Salmonella is a bacteria that can be lethal, especially in children and the elderly. As of today, some companies charge an artificial premium to customers who are willing to pay more for eggs that meet heightened welfare and food safety standards. What this has done is create a two-tiered system in our state—higher income citizens can afford safer products for their families, while others have to settle for potentially-unsafe products. This premium will disappear once egg producers are held to the same basic criteria, providing people of all income levels with safer food.

Marylanders believe in compassion for all animals, not just pets. New polling numbers from YouGov show that seventy-six percent of Maryland voters support their legislators voting in favor of cage-free egg legislation like SB 690, while only 17 percent oppose. This support crossed party lines, with 84 percent of Democrats, 60 percent of Republicans and 71 percent of Independents in support of their legislator voting in favor of the proposal.

There is testimony from over 100 family farmers and 15 Maryland veterinarians calling for the passage of this legislation. Our farmers and veterinarians know first-hand the behavioral needs of egg-laying birds, and the cruelty of battery cages. Their support is testimony to the importance of this critical humane legislation.

We understand that the recent outbreak of Avian flu has shocked the industry and impacted egg prices. However, there is a built-in delay between the law taking effect and the producers needing to implement this legislation. That built-in delay provides time for farmers to manage the impact of the Avian flu and prepare for the new requirements. Maryland residents shouldn't have to wait to have guaranteed access to safer eggs.

The current spike in egg prices is due to Avian flu – and to retailers and producers using that situation to inflate egg prices even further and secure record profits. California's cage-free egg law, which mirrors Maryland's bill, went into effect over a year ago. According to an agribusiness industry source, it led to an increase in prices of less than a penny per egg.

Sincerely,



Senator Karen Lewis Young

Amendments to SB690.pdf

Uploaded by: Karen Lewis Young

Position: FAV

There are a few amendments needed to ensure the bill matches with legislation passed in other states and creates a clear and consistent regulatory framework. I request that the committee:

- 1) Add a purpose statement to clarify the intent of the bill

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S AUTHORITY TO PROTECT THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF CONSUMERS, INCLUDING TO PROMOTE FOOD SAFETY, PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH, AND ADVANCE ANIMAL WELFARE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT THE REGULATION OF EGG PRODUCTION ON FARMS AND THE SALE OF EGGS AND EGG PRODUCTS WILL FURTHER THESE GOALS.

- 2) Clarify the definition of "egg products" to remain consistent with the existing regulatory framework

(3) "EGG PRODUCTS" DOES NOT INCLUDE COMBINATION FOOD PRODUCTS THAT ARE COMPOSED OF MORE THAN JUST EGG, SUGAR, SALT, WATER, SEASONING, COLORING, FLAVORING, PRESERVATIVES, STABILIZERS, AND SIMILAR FOOD ADDITIVES.

I am also very open to a discussion around a slight adjustment to the implementation date as well as adding incentives to help farmers adjust their housing to accommodate this requirement. However, those discussions need to be within the framework of a clear mandate that ensures better welfare standards for chickens and makes safer food more affordable for Maryland families.

Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Co

Uploaded by: Lisa Radov

Position: FAV



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

March 2, 2023

To: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Agriculture – Confinement of Egg – Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production – Prohibitions – SB 690 -Support

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chair of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Agriculture – Confinement of Egg – Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production – Prohibitions – SB 690.

Most hens in the egg industry are crammed into wire cages so small they can't even spread their wings. Packed five or more to a cage, each hen is forced to spend her whole life in a meager amount of space that is smaller than the dimensions of an iPad. Virtually unable to move, the hens are prohibited from engaging in almost any of their natural behaviors, like perching, nesting, and dustbathing.

SB 690 contains the United Egg Producers' own cage-free standards. These standards allow the birds to perform important natural behaviors like flapping their wings, walking, bathing and laying eggs in nest boxes. Requiring all eggs produced and sold in Maryland to meet the industry's own cage-free standards would improve quality of life for over five million egg-laying hens every year. Moreover, the majority of US current egg production relies on battery cages, a known source of disease for chickens and humans.

Ten states have already passed legislation or regulations banning cages for egg-laying hens, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Colorado, Utah, Michigan, Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, and Nevada. Battery cages for egg-laying hens are prohibited in eighteen countries, including the European Union, India, New Zealand, Israel, Norway, and Switzerland.

Marylanders believe in compassion for *all* animals, not just pets. New polling numbers from YouGov show that seventy-six percent of Maryland voters support their legislators voting in favor of cage-free egg legislation like SB 690, while only 17 percent oppose.

We need to take action to promote the health and well-being of egg laying hens and Marylanders.

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Lewis Young her sponsorship of SB 690 and ask the committee for a favorable report.

Veterinary Support for SB690_03.01.23.pdf

Uploaded by: Pam Runquist

Position: FAV



**HUMANE SOCIETY
VETERINARY MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION.**

March 1, 2023

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Blackwell, DVM, MPH
Knoxville, TN

Gary Block, DVM, MS, DACVIM
East Greenwich, RI

Barry Kellogg, VMD
North Port, FL

Barry Kipperman, DVM,
DACVIM, MSc
San Ramon, CA

Paula Kislak, DVM
Santa Barbara, CA

Nicole Paquette, JD
Washington, DC

Gwendy Reyes-Illg, DVM
Milwaukie, OR

Meredith Rives, DVM
Evanston, IL

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Holly Cheever, DVM
Voorheesville, NY

Nicholas Dodman, BVMS,
DACVB, DACVAA
Grafton, MA

Anne Fawcett, BVSc,
MVetStud GradCertEd,
MANZCVS, DipECAWBMB
NSW, Australia

Brenda Forsythe, MD, PhD,
DVM, CAAB
Guadalupe, CA

Zarah Hedge, DVM, MPH,
DACVPM, DABVP
San Diego, CA

Joann Lindenmayer, DVM, MPH
North Grafton, MA

Sheila (D'Arpino) Segurson,
DVM, DACVB
Pleasanton, CA

Erin Spencer, M.Ed.,
CVT, VTS (ECC)
Derry, NH

Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Veterinary Support for SB690

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the committee:

The undersigned veterinarians are writing to convey our strong support for SB690, legislation that would phase out the cruel cage-confinement of egg-laying hens.

It is commonsense that animals be allowed to engage in basic movements and postural adjustments. This intuitive perspective is validated by an abundance of scientific evidence demonstrating that intensive confinement systems (like the battery cages used in some egg facilities) are detrimental to the physical and psychological welfare of farm animals and that these systems create public health concerns.

To cite just one notable example, the prestigious Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production—a panel of experts including a former veterinary school dean and a Secretary of the USDA—concluded “...that the most intensive confinement systems, such as . . . battery cages for poultry...prevent the animal from a normal range of movement and constitute inhumane treatment.” The Commission recommended a phase-out of the most intensive and inhumane production practices, including battery cages for egg-laying hens.

Modern replacements for this extreme confinement method already exist, are in widespread commercial use, and are economically viable. Cage-free systems allow birds to move freely through their environment and to engage in natural behaviors—such as dust-bathing, nesting and perching—which are thwarted by cage confinement.

We respectfully encourage the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee to support SB690 to protect egg-laying hens by eliminating the use of inhumane cage confinement in the state and requiring that all eggs sold in



HUMANE SOCIETY
VETERINARY MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION.

Maryland come from cage-free hens. SB690—a commonsense reform measure—will ensure a more humane, safer, and sustainable food system.

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carrie B. Waters'.

Carrie Waters, DVM, PhD, JD, DACVIM

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nikhil Joshi'.

Nikhil Joshi, VMD

HSVMA Maryland State Co-Representatives

And the following additional Maryland veterinarians:

- Robert Adelman, DVM, Bowie
- Martha Jane Badura, DVM, Baltimore
- Myron Bradley, DVM, Taneytown
- Jodi M. Edwards, DVM, Bowie
- Cinthia Fabretti-Apling, DVM, Germantown
- Erika Hoffeld, DVM, DACVP, Silver Spring
- Susan Jones, DVM, Silver Spring
- Nancy Kauder, VMD, Baltimore
- Faouzi Kechrid, DVM, Baltimore
- Felicia Langel, VMD, PhD, JD, Frederick
- Karlyn Shisler McPartland, DVM, Jessup
- Linda Reinhardt, DVM, West Friendship
- Brenda Stewart, VMD, Woodbine
- James Stewart, VMD, Woodbine
- Lindsay Vega, DVM, Smithsburg

SB690_Favorable_Sara Shields.pdf

Uploaded by: Sara Shields

Position: FAV



HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

Thursday, March 2, 2023

*Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl Kagan, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Standing Committee on Education, Energy and the Environment*

Submitted by: Dr. Sara Shields, Director of Farm Animal Welfare Science, Humane Society International

RE: Testimony in strong support of SB 690: Relating to Egg-Laying Hens

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB690, a bill that is important for consumers and for animals.

I am an ethologist, a specialist in animal behavior and I completed my doctoral work at the University of California at Davis. I am the Director of Farm Animal Welfare Science for Humane Society International, and I work with farmers, corporations, governments, financial institutions and veterinarians around the world to improve the welfare of farm animals. I respectfully request your support for SB 690, a bill that would require modest protections for egg-laying hens.

The confinement of animals in intensive agricultural production systems is an important issue. Consumers and food companies are increasingly concerned about how food is produced. It is well documented in scientific literature that certain aspects of intensive animal production are detrimental to the welfare of farm animals. This is particularly true for egg-laying hens confined to wire “battery cages,” which are so small the birds cannot even spread their wings. These systems prevent the expression of important natural behavior and have real physical consequences on the health and well-being of the animals. For example, the lack of normal movement and exercise is a prime cause of skeletal weakness in hens,^{1,2,3} birds already prone to osteoporosis due to genetic selection for egg production, which requires significant calcium metabolism. Hens in cages are unable to roost at preferred heights, dustbathe, forage or express other forms of highly motivated natural behavior, each with a particular biological function. Comfort behavior, such as stretching, wing-flapping, and preening, are also reduced or prevented in battery-cages.^{4,5,6} Feathers are important for body temperature regulation and protecting the underlying skin, but in cages, abrasion of the feathers against the wire can damage the hen’s plumage.⁷ A cage is simply not an acceptable housing environment for a hen.

Battery cages were widely introduced after World War II, at a time when we knew much less about the behavioral needs of animals. Confinement systems were promoted as part of a trend toward the mechanization and automation of agriculture. There was little understanding of the depth of animals’ ability to experience emotional suffering. Since then, the concept of animal welfare has evolved and become much more widely recognized, parallel to the published scientific research in animal behavior and cognition. **This research has confirmed that hens are intelligent, active, inquisitive, social animals with complex needs beyond simply feed, water, and shelter.**



HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

The application of the new science to improved animal housing designs has resulted in modern, viable, cage-free housing systems that provide more space and key resources, including nesting boxes, perches and loose litter. These features are designed around the biology of the hens, working with, rather than suppressing, their natural behavior. Modern cage-free systems are widely and successfully used around the world. In the United States alone, cage-free egg production has grown from a modest 4% of the total egg market in 2009 to 36% in 2022. Given the recent advances in legislation, and corporate commitments to purchase only cage-free eggs, this percentage is expected to continue to grow. There is now a large body of advice and guidelines from universities, genetics companies, animal welfare certifiers and equipment manufacturers to assist egg producers in managing cage-free systems well. Growing experience has resulted in cage-free hens that are healthy and productive.

Like any other business, farms must keep pace with new research, market shifts, and changing social norms. Consumers care about where their food comes from, and they expect animals to be well treated on farms. **Cage-free production is the industry best practice and battery cages are outdated and inhumane.**

Please enact SB 690 and bring Maryland's egg production in line with the science, and with modern expectations regarding how farm animals should be housed.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Sara Shields, PhD.
Director, Farm Animal Welfare Science
Humane Society International

¹ Shipov A, Sharir A, Zelzer E, Milgram J, Monsonogo-Ornan E, and Shahar R. 2010. The influence of severe prolonged exercise restriction on the mechanical and structural properties of bone in an avian model. *The Veterinary Journal* 183:153–60.

² Knowles TG and Broom DG. 1990. Limb bone strength and movement in laying hens from different housing systems. *Veterinary Record* 126:354-6.

³ Norgaard-Nielsen G. 1990. Bone strength of laying hens kept in an alternative system compared with hens in cages and on deep-litter. *British Poultry Science* 31(1):81-9.

⁴ Nicol CJ. 1987. Effect of cage height and area on the behaviour of hens housed in battery cages. *British Poultry Science* 28:327-35.

⁵ Hughes BO and Black AJ. 1974. The effect of environmental factors on activity, selected behaviour patterns and "fear" of fowls in cages and pens. *British Poultry Science* 15:375-80.

⁶ Appleby MC, Mench JA, and Hughes BO. 2004. *Poultry Behaviour and Welfare* (Wallingford, U.K.: CABI Publishing).

⁷ European Food Safety Authority. 2023. Welfare of laying hens on farm. *EFSA Journal* 21(2):7789.

Oppose SB 690 - Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-L

Uploaded by: Colby Ferguson

Position: UNF



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

March 2, 2023

To: Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Oppose SB 690 – Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions**

On behalf of our Farm Bureau member families in Maryland, I submit this written testimony in opposition of SB 690. This bill bans the use of cages in an egg-laying farms in Maryland starting January 1, 2025.

The economic impact to an existing farm to make these changes is a 41% increase in cost of production to retrofit the existing barns and an 119% increase in labor. By moving to a cage-free operation, the hen mortality rate increases significantly due to more bacterial habitat being introduced in the barn. Lastly, these farms are contracted with out of state companies that will just drop their contracts with the farms and then these farms will have to create a new demand for their eggs in a market where there is already an oversupply of cage-free eggs. This bill would put the few egg-laying farms, that farm this way, out of business.

MDFB Policy: We oppose any legislation that would interfere with the right of farmers to raise livestock and poultry in accordance with commonly accepted agricultural practices.

Regulations imposed on agriculture shall be based on economically sound and scientifically proven research to ensure that agriculture, including livestock and poultry industries, remains viable and continues to be a strong economic base for Maryland. All regulations shall be subjected to a rigorous scientifically justifiable cost/benefit analysis.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU RESPECTFULLY OPPOSES SB 690

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colby Ferguson". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396

SB690 Agriculture Confinement of Egg Laying Hens.p

Uploaded by: Daniel McHugh

Position: UNF



WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

P.O. BOX 870

SALISBURY, MARYLAND 21803-0870

410-548-4801

FAX: 410-548-4803

Julie M. Giordano
County Executive

Bunky Luffman
Director of Administration

February 23, 2023

The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB 690 Agriculture-Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production

Dear Senator Feldman:

We are writing this letter for an unfavorable vote for SB690 that will be heard by the Committee March 7, 2023.

As County Executive of Wicomico County, I am concerned for the burdensome regulation this would put on the farmers who are in the business of egg production. Our agriculture community is a staple in our way of life. Both economically and culturally, the working farmers are the unsung heroes. Ensuring everyday our citizens are being fed and nourished, in addition the poultry industry which is an economic engine here. In a recent report the price of eggs has surged by 70% the national average retail price of a dozen eggs has increased to \$4.82 in January, up nearly 60 cents from a month prior, however up from a \$1.92 a year ago.

It seems this would add to the burdens that our famers in the state and our region are struggling with at this time.

For this reason, I respectfully ask the committee for an unfavorable report of SB690.

Respectfully,

WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

Julie M. Giordano
County Executive

SB690 - RMC Opposition Testimony - Agriculture - C

Uploaded by: Megan D'Arcy

Position: UNF

Susan O'Neill, Chair

Charlotte Davis, Executive Director

Testimony in Opposition of
Senate Bill 690 – Agriculture – Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg
Production - Prohibitions
Education, Energy, and the Environment
March 2, 2023

The Rural Maryland Council opposes Senate Bill 690 – Agriculture – Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions. This bill prohibits a certain farm owner or operator from knowingly confining egg-laying hens in an enclosure in a certain manner, subject to certain exceptions, on and after January 1, 2025; prohibiting a business owner or operator or a farm owner or operator from selling shell eggs or egg products under certain circumstances on and after January 1, 2025; and specifying that a certain certification be obtained in a certain manner to sell shell eggs and egg products.

The Council opposes SB690 because it will create economic hardship to egg-laying farmers by banning their traditional practices and forcing them to make costly changes to their existing barns in order to sell their product – the result would be a 41% increase in cost production to retrofit existing barns and an 119% increase in labor.

For the health of the birds, cages are used as a form of protection and are an approved animal agriculture practice. By moving to a cage-free operation, the hen mortality rate increases significantly due to more bacterial habitat being introduced in the barn. Lastly, these farms are contracted with out-of-state companies that will just drop their contracts with the farms and then these farms will have to create a new demand for their eggs in a market where there is already an oversupply of cage-free eggs. This bill would put the Maryland egg-laying farms, that farm this way, out of business. Currently, the industry is about 5% of all poultry (approximately \$50 to \$60 million in sales), which means a lot of growers would be negatively affected.

The Rural Maryland Council supports the State's poultry industry – the largest agricultural sector in Maryland and requests that you oppose Senate Bill 690.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) is an independent state agency governed by a nonpartisan, 40-member board that consists of inclusive representation from the federal, state, regional, county and municipal governments, as well as the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. We bring together federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to identify challenges unique to rural communities and to craft public policy, programmatic or regulatory solutions.