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Senate Bill 193 - Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production – Prohibitions

Committee: Education, Energy and Environment

MGPA Position: OPPOSE

The Maryland Grain Producers Association (MGPA) serves as the voice of grain farmers growing corn, wheat, barley and sorghum across the state. MGPA opposes Senate Bill 193 which would prohibit beginning in calendar 2026, knowing confinement of an “egg-laying hen” in an enclosure that is not a “cage-free housing system” require the farm owner or operator to obtain a certificate of compliance and prohibits the sale of shell eggs or egg products in violation of the bill’s prohibition or the certificate requirement.

MGPA supports the responsible and humane care of egg-laying hens which is currently being done in both caged and cage-free systems in Maryland. Currently, egg-laying hens in Maryland consume nearly 3 million bushels of corn directly from Maryland farmers every year. This is 4% of Maryland total corn production and a value of nearly \$15M to Maryland farmers.

While some of these farms have already begun the transition to cage-free houses and plan to continue, it is a long and expensive transition. Prohibition of non-cage-free housing systems at the beginning of 2026 is not a realistic or feasible timeline. Requiring this change on such a short timeline would take 80% of current Maryland egg production offline. This would be a significant loss to Maryland grain farmers from a market demand perspective.

MGPA believes the market is moving in this direction in a manner and at a speed that is logistically and financially feasible.

We urge your unfavorable report on Senate Bill 193.