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January 22, 2024

To: Chairman Feldman
Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Re: SB0193 Comments

Honorable Senator Feldman:

The Maryland Egg Council is a non-profit organization based in Maryland which represents Maryland egg producers promoting the consumption of eggs to our residents. We are strongly opposed to the passage of SB0193 which would restrict the production and sale of eggs and egg products in the state of Maryland. This bill will create a tremendous economic burden on our producers and regulatory agencies tasked with its enforcement. At a minimum the state of Maryland should at least work with the industry to create a reasonable timeline for implementation. Other states have done the following:

- Massachusetts passed a law in 2016 similar to the proposal, but did not expect implementation until 2022
- Rhode Island pass a law in 2018 similar to the proposal, but not expect implementation until 2026
- Michigan pass a law in 2019 similar to the proposal, but not expect implementation until 2025

For egg producers in the state, it would take generally 12 to 18 months to even build a new cage-free facility to house the laying hens to ensure the same inventory level of egg flow to Maryland consumers. These types of investments cost on average \$45 per laying hen so you can imagine the expense that would put on any one company participating in this industry.

While the Council strongly opposes any form of regulation around the egg laying industry, at a minimum the legislation should see the value in creating a reasonable glide path for the industry and regulation to adopt a new standard. In addition, as you are aware, the lifecycle for laying hen extends longer than 12 months thereby putting animal lives at risk.

As of January 22, 2024, the Food Lion in Bel Air, Maryland was advertising a dozen large white eggs at \$1.59 while the large cage free brown at \$3.29. This shows the impact to the consumer in a challenging economic environment.

Again, all parties need to evaluate the impact of this change through fact-based research to ensure a successful outcome for the State of Maryland.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Resnick".

Matt Resnick
President
Maryland Egg Council