



**HUMANE SOCIETY
VETERINARY MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION.**

February 7, 2024

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Chair Marc Korman, Vice Chair Regina T. Boyce, and
Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: VETERINARY SUPPORT for HB 357

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association (HSVMA), I am writing to convey our strong organizational support for HB 357, 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.



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We respectfully encourage the House Environment and Transportation Committee to support HB 357 to protect egg-laying hens by eliminating the use of inhumane cage confinement in the state and requiring that all eggs sold in Maryland come from cage-free hens. HB 357—a commonsense reform measure—will ensure a more humane, safer, and sustainable food system.

Sincerely,

Carrie B. Waters

Carrie Waters, DVM, PhD, JD, DACVIM
HSVMA Maryland State Representative