



**Date:** Wednesday, February 14, 2024

**Time and Location:** 1:00 pm in the House Environment and Transportation Committee

**To:** Del. Marc A. Korman, Chair  
Del. Regina T. Boyce, Vice-Chair  
Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

**Submitted by:** Nancy Perry, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, ASPCA

**RE:** Support of HB 357: Agriculture – Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions

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

On behalf of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), the over 25,000 Maryland citizens we represent and our more than 2 million supporters nationwide, I am here today to voice our strong support for HB 357. The ASPCA has provided more than \$1.4m directly to Maryland organizations that work to protect animals in the last decade and as important as those grants are, we feel strongly that it is essential to prevent harm to animals by enacting positive policies like HB 357. This bill would improve the welfare of millions of laying hens, align Maryland with the broader movement to transition to higher-welfare farming systems and ensure that farmers in the state can lead the way in meeting the ever-growing demand for cage-free eggs.

Public surveys have repeatedly shown that citizens are concerned about the welfare of farm animals. This concern drives increasing demand for more humane options and has led more than 200 companies to commit to adopting cage-free systems, including companies like Dollar Tree, Costco, Target, McDonald's, and Walmart, as well as Maryland-based Sodexo and Marriott. Recently, McDonald's announced that every one of its locations in the United States is now 100% cage-free, demonstrating the efficacy of this policy, and the company has stated it would not raise prices for consumers as a result of this shift. State legislatures have also responded to this demand as 11 other states have banned the confinement of laying hens in battery cages.

[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. Other research has shown a *production* cost difference of only a couple pennies per egg. 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.

HB 357 is a common-sense bill, offering clear space and enrichment requirements and exempts small producers. HB 357 will help ensure better lives for Maryland's animals, farmers, and increased access to products that align better with Marylander's values.

For these reasons, the ASPCA respectfully urges this committee to vote in support of HB 357 and I thank the committee for their consideration today.

Sincerely,

*Nancy Perry*

Nancy Perry  
Senior Vice President of Government Relations  
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)