

**Michelle Kleinhans
404 Denfeld Ave.
Kensington, MD 20895**

Re: SB806/HB0834

Dear Maryland Legislators,

I am writing to express my support for SB806/HB0834 which would prohibit *“certain farm owners or operators from knowingly confining egg-laying hens in an enclosure that is not a cage-free housing system and does not meet certain space requirements, subject to certain exceptions, on and after January 1, 2030; and prohibiting a business owner or operator or a farm owner or operator from selling shell eggs or egg products without a certain certification of compliance on and after January 1, 2030.”*

I support this bill for a number of reasons. First, because it is widely known that battery cages are physically and mentally excruciating for hens. With four or five hens per cage, each hen has a space about half the size of an 8.5” x 11” paper in which to spend her entire egg-laying life. Not only can they not walk or fly, but they can’t even stretch their wings or extend their necks. Furthermore, the wire floors cause painful foot problems and the overcrowding causes emotional distress and aggression.

My neighbors raise hens in their backyard and I spend many hours watching them preen in the dust and sunbathe. They enjoy when I sing to them and they love being held and cuddled, similar to my pet cats. Some of them come running to me when I approach. They each have their own personality. It breaks my heart to think of other hens not being able to engage in these natural behaviors.

Apart from the extreme cruelty inherent in caged confinement, there is some evidence that cage free eggs would benefit humans as well. At [least one global egg producer has reported a decreased use of antibiotics in cage-free hens](#). As you may know, the overuse of antibiotics is thought to be a major contributor to antibiotic-resistant disease in human medicine. [This is just one of the reasons why more and more consumers support the idea of banning cage-confined laying hens](#).

Countries from India to Switzerland to Canada, and even the EU, have already banned the use of battery cages, and in the US several states have as well. Furthermore, large corporations such as Walmart and McDonald’s have phased out their use after hearing from consumers who prefer cruelty-free products that they also perceive to be healthier and tastier. It’s time for Maryland to step up to the plate and take the pledge to ban battery cages!

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,

Michelle Kleinhans

404-313-9755

