

My name is Jennifer Voelker, and I am a resident of Nottingham, Maryland. I am writing in strong support of SB806/HB0834, which would ban the sale of eggs from battery-caged hens. This bill is a smart and necessary step for our state because it improves food safety, protects public health, and ensures that Maryland's agricultural industry remains competitive in a rapidly changing market.

One of the most significant concerns with eggs from caged production systems is **food safety**. Research has shown that eggs from battery cage facilities are at a higher risk of **Salmonella contamination**, which poses serious health risks to consumers. When hens are packed tightly together in outdated systems, bacteria can spread more easily, increasing the likelihood of contaminated eggs entering the market. Reducing this risk should be a priority for Maryland, and moving toward cage-free production is one proven way to do so.

Additionally, the market is already shifting toward **cage-free** eggs. Major grocery chains, restaurants, and food manufacturers have committed to transitioning away from battery cage eggs. States like Michigan, California, and Massachusetts have passed similar laws, and egg producers have adapted. If Maryland does not follow suit, our businesses risk falling behind, and our grocery stores and restaurants may have to source eggs from out-of-state producers who have already made the transition. Passing this bill would help ensure a level playing field for Maryland farmers and businesses.

This bill is not about restricting choices—it's about **ensuring Maryland keeps up with industry standards, protects consumers, and provides economic stability** for our local food systems. I urge you to pass SB806/HB0834 and keep Maryland competitive in a modernizing marketplace.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Voelker

15 Joppawood Ct, Apt B1, Nottingham, MD 21236