

My name is Molly Kogan, and I am a resident of Montgomery County in support of the Bill Number SB806/HB0834. I have been living in Montgomery County for 4 years as a Scientist/Senior Scientist working in biotechnology. As such, I feel confident in stating that prohibiting a certain farm owner or operator from knowingly confining egg-laying hens in an enclosure that is not a cage-free housing system is the best decision to ensure we prevent Montgomery County from spreading infectious diseases caused by animal waste and poor animal welfare conditions. Keeping chickens in confinements that are, on average, 67 square inches means birds are sitting in their own feces and contaminating the food intended for human consumption. That is concerning as we do not want to relive a global pandemic. The easiest way to reduce the risk of widespread illness is to enforce that chickens need more space, and ban the use of battery cages.

In addition to the public health concern that battery cages bring, the chicken's well-being suffers when battery cages are used. Often as a result of battery cages the chickens battle starvation, molting, osteoporosis, and physical trauma due to the confined space and poor living conditions. The life expectancy of a chicken raised in a battery cage is only 2 years when free range chickens can live up to 10 years. Chickens being malnourished and poorly treated in battery cages are then being fed to my friends and family in Maryland. I fear that the food they believe is high in protein and packed with nutrients is riddled with infection and not nourishing their bodies as well as an egg or chicken raised in a cage free environment would be. Over 200 companies have pledged to eliminate battery cages from their US supply chains. The trend is to improve animal welfare for the chickens, and Maryland needs to follow the lead of other states that have banned battery cages and are improving the health and food supply for their constituents.

In conclusion I support Bill Number SB806/HB0834 which bans battery cages in Maryland. I ask that committee sees the benefits in ridding Maryland of battery cages and votes in favor of the bill. I thank you for your time and consideration.