

SB806
IN FAVOR

To: Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 27, 2025

My name is Michele Waldman. I am the Founder and President of Rosie's Farm Sanctuary, a 501(c)(3) animal sanctuary in Potomac. Each year, Rosie's Farm provides educational tours to hundreds of people in our community and schools. We hosts dozens of high school interns, have 35,00 followers, and reach millions of people through social media. I had the honor of taking Chair Feldman on a tour last year.

We care for many types of farmed animals, including egg-laying hens, and I am fortunate to spend time with them every day. If you know hens, you know they are full of personality. Hens are highly intelligent, affectionate, social, and playful. My girls chitchat with each other happily all day while foraging and exploring. Like all birds, my girls love to stretch and flap their wings. They form deep friendships—both with each other and with humans. They recognize over a hundred faces.

We have one hen named Marilyn Monroe, and she loves to sit on laps and get cuddles. When school children come to visit, she runs to them for affection and treats. You should see the faces of the children when they meet her - their eyes light up with joy, realizing how similar Marilyn Monroe is to their dogs at home.

I would hate to see the children's faces if they saw birds in battery cages. The thought of a hen spending her entire life crammed inside a battery cage is unimaginable, cruel, and unnecessary. I support SB806 because it is a viable and more humane alternative to current practices. It takes into account birds, farmers and consumers. Quite frankly, this bill is the bare minimum we should provide these hens.

You may hear the opposition today saying to leave this decision to the marketplace and that we don't need laws to banning cages. If that were the case, then what are we doing here? Aren't laws meant to improve society and to help us advance and evolve?

Each of my hens has a unique personality. But don't just take my word for it—come meet them yourselves. I invite all of you, along with your staff and families, to visit Rosie's Farm Sanctuary and see firsthand the incredible beings we are discussing today.

Thank you for your time and consideration.