



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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February 25, 2025

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Agriculture - Roosters – Restrictions – SB 375 - Support

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across the State of Maryland, I respectfully ask that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Agriculture - Roosters – Restrictions – SB 375.

SB 375 protects our communities from the adverse effects of cockfighting and threat of Avian Flu by prohibiting a person who keeps roosters that are maintained individually and kept movement-constrained through use of an enclosure or tether from keeping more than 5 roosters per acre on a single property or more than a total of 25 roosters on a single property.

Cockfighting is illegal in Maryland. Roosters are bred for aggression and placed in a pit to fight each other to the death with razor-sharp knives or other sharp instruments attached to their legs for amusement and gambling. Birds suffer painful deaths while spectators gamble on their fate. Marylanders overwhelmingly reject this cruelty as a sport or entertainment.

Breeding roosters is linked to the spread of Avian Flu, which has recently seen a resurgence in Maryland. Since the first outbreak, more than 2.5 million birds in Maryland commercial flocks have been killed due to Avian Flu and roosters kept in these conditions for cockfighting are a needless risk to the further spread of this devastating disease.

A Maryland rooster law will not affect commercial poultry operations, backyard breeders, members of 4-H or Future Farmers of America. It will protect animals, the poultry industry, and communities by cracking down on those who keep and sell roosters for cockfighting

Let's protect the health and safety of Marylanders by ensuring that cockfighting has no place in our state!

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Kramer for his sponsorship of SB 375 and ask the committee for a favorable report.