

# **HB0834 – Advocating for Maryland's Health and Ethi**

Uploaded by: Adeniyi Joseph

Position: FAV

**Subject:** Testimony in Support of SB806 – Advocating for Maryland's Health and Ethical Standards

Dear Chair Feldman and Vice Chair Cheryl C. Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Fawaz Joseph, a resident of Maryland, and I am writing to express my strong support for SB806, which seeks to ban the sale of eggs from hens confined in battery cages. This legislation is pivotal for safeguarding the health, and ethical standards of Maryland.

## **Public Health Concerns**

Battery cages, which confine hens to spaces smaller than a sheet of letter-sized paper, not only subject animals to inhumane conditions but also pose significant health risks to consumers. Studies have indicated that eggs from such environments have a higher likelihood of Salmonella contamination, jeopardizing the well-being of Maryland families. Additionally, the extreme confinement of battery cages creates ideal conditions for the spread of bird flu, a serious public health concern that has caused numerous outbreaks in recent years. These confined conditions lead to higher rates of contamination with foodborne pathogens and increase the risk of disease transmission, affecting our entire community's food safety.

## **Reflecting Maryland's Ethical Values**

This bill also reflects the values of Marylanders. People care about where their food comes from, and polling consistently shows that consumers overwhelmingly support more humane farming practices. Our state prides itself on upholding ethical standards and compassion. The extreme confinement of hens in battery cages, which prevents them from engaging in natural behaviors such as nesting and perching, go against these values. Transitioning to cage-free systems allows hens to move freely and express natural behaviors, aligning our food production practices with the ethical expectations of Maryland consumers.

In conclusion, SB806 is not merely a legislative proposal but a commitment to the health and ethical standards of Maryland. I urge you to vote favorably on this bill, reflecting the values and interests of Maryland..

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Adeniyi Fawaz Joseph

341 White Ash Place, Gaithersburg Maryland

240 651 9929 | josephf0508@gmail.com

# **Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm Testimony.p**

Uploaded by: Bridgette Downer

Position: FAV

Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: Support for SB 806**

To the Esteemed Members of the Committee,

I own and operate Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm in Darnestown. In addition to growing organic market produce, we raise chickens and ducks.

My experience in raising birds confirms my belief that hens deserve better than cramped cages where they're nearly immobilized. As a farmer, I believe in treating animals with care and respect. SB 806 ensures that laying hens have space to move, which reduces stress, improves health, and provides better welfare.

Maryland should be a leader in humane farming practices. Please support SB 806.

Respectfully,

Bridgette Downer

# **HumaneVMA Written Testimony SB 806 .pdf**

Uploaded by: Carrie Waters

Position: FAV



Formerly called the Humane  
Society of the United States

## Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance

1255 23<sup>rd</sup> St. NW, Suite 450  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-452-1100

[humaneworld.org/HumaneVMA](http://humaneworld.org/HumaneVMA)

February 25, 2025

Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: **Veterinary Support for SB 806**: Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance (HumaneVMA), a national organization of more than 8,000 veterinary professional members (including 60 Maryland veterinarians) with a focus on the health and welfare of all animals, including those raised for food. We strongly support SB 806, legislation that would phase out the cruel cage-confinement of egg-laying hens.

Animals should be allowed to engage in basic movements and postural adjustments. An abundance of scientific evidence demonstrates that intensive confinement systems are detrimental to the physical and psychological welfare of farm animals and create public health concerns.

The prestigious Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production—a panel of experts including a former veterinary school dean and a Secretary of the USDA—concluded “...that the most intensive confinement systems, such as . . . battery cages for poultry...prevent the animal from a normal range of movement and constitute inhumane treatment.”<sup>i</sup> The Commission recommended phasing out the most inhumane production practices, including battery cages for egg-laying hens, to reduce the “risks to public health and improve animal well-being.” Recent studies support the significant animal welfare benefits of cage-free systems.

Modern replacements for this extreme confinement method already exist, are in widespread commercial use, and are economically practical. Cage-free systems allow birds to move freely through their environment and to engage in natural behaviors—such as dustbathing, nesting and perching—which are thwarted by cage confinement.

We respectfully encourage the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to support SB 806 to protect egg-laying hens by ending the use of inhumane cage confinement in the state and requiring that all eggs sold in Maryland come from cage-free hens. SB 806 will ensure a more humane, safer, and sustainable food system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie B. Waters".

Carrie B. Waters, DVM, PhD, JD, DACVIM  
Maryland State Representative  
Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance (HumaneVMA)

<sup>i</sup> Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Production, Putting Meat on the Table: Industrial Farm Production in America, 2008, p. 38

**MD SB 806 Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cat Kelly

Position: FAV



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aldf.org

2/25/2025

## Memorandum in Support – SB 806

### *AN ACT concerning Agriculture – Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production – Prohibitions*

On behalf of the Animal Legal Defense Fund—the nation's preeminent legal advocacy organization for animals—and our supporters in Maryland, we submit this memo asking you to support SB 806, proposed legislation which would establish vital animal welfare and food safety standards for hens raised and eggs sold in Maryland.

#### **SB 806 would end one of the cruelest factory farm practices.**

Battery cage systems force hens to endure extreme confinement—less space per bird than an A4 piece of printer paper—for 18 months before slaughter. The severe limitation of physical movement can lead to metabolic disorders including disuse osteoporosis and liver damage. Hens also commonly suffer from bone fractures because calcium is continually leached from their skeletal system to produce eggs, and their confinement makes it physically impossible for them to get the exercise needed to strengthen their bones. Caged hens are denied almost all their natural behaviors including nesting, perching, foraging, and dustbathing: All of which are critical for their psychological and physical welfare. SB 806 would put an end to this extreme confinement and give hens the space they need to be hens.

#### **SB 806 would improve food safety.**

More than a dozen scientific studies have found that cage operations are significantly more likely to harbor *Salmonella* than cage-free facilities.<sup>1</sup> The European Food Safety Authority analysis found 43% lower odds of *Salmonella enteritidis* contamination in cage-free barns.<sup>2</sup> The egg industry itself acknowledges the problem, with one poultry trade journal admitting, “*Salmonella* thrives in cage housing.”<sup>3</sup>

*Salmonella* kills more Americans and sends more people to the hospital than any other foodborne pathogen. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) estimates that 142,000 illnesses each year are caused by consuming eggs contaminated with *Salmonella*. Because *Salmonella* can infect the ovaries of hens, eggs from infected birds can be laid with the bacteria already inside. *Salmonella* can survive various cooking methods, (from sunny-side-up, over-easy, to scrambled), according to research funded by the American Egg Board.

Battery egg production externalizes its true cost. The economic cost of the illnesses caused by cage systems, in the form of consumer medical bills, insurance coverage, and lost work productivity, is significant, and this

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<sup>1</sup> *An HSUS Report: Food Safety and Cage Egg Production*, HUMANE SOC'Y OF THE U.S. 1 (May 1, 2011), <https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/report-food-safety-eggs.pdf> (accessed Feb. 12, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 3.

<sup>3</sup> Glenn Greenwald, Leighton Akio Woodhouse, *Consumers Are Revolting Against Animal Cruelty — So the Poultry Industry Is Lobbying for Laws to Force Stores to Sell Their Eggs*, THE INTERCEPT (Mar. 2, 2018), <https://theintercept.com/2018/03/02/consumers-are-revolting-against-animal-cruelty-so-the-poultry-industry-is-lobbying-for-laws-to-force-stores-to-sell-their-eggs/> (accessed Feb. 12, 2025).

is to say nothing of the extreme suffering that millions of animals endure in these systems for nearly the entirety of their lives. Shifting to cage-free can drastically reduce these economic, consumer safety, and welfare costs for the price of less than a penny to a few cents per egg.

**SB 806 would create market and regulatory certainty.**

This legislation would bring Maryland egg-laying hen welfare and food safety standards in line with major food companies and other states that are calling for cage-free conditions. When McDonald's announced it was going cage-free, it stated it wouldn't raise prices at all. More than 200 of the country's largest food companies have committed to switching to a 100 percent cage-free egg supply. This includes Burger King, Unilever, General Mills, Aramark, and Costco, along with Maryland-based Sodexo and Marriott. Already, California, Massachusetts, Oregon, Washington, Michigan, Colorado, Nevada, and Arizona have passed similar cage-free egg laws. It's time for Maryland to be the next.

It is for these reasons that the Animal Legal Defense Fund urges you to pass SB 806. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cat Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Cat Kelly  
Legislative Affairs Fellow  
Animal Legal Defense Fund  
ckelly@aldf.org

**FriendsoftheEarth\_ChloeWaterman\_FAV\_SB806.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chloe Waterman

Position: FAV



Chloe Waterman  
Sr. Program Manager, Climate-Friendly Food Campaign  
Friends of the Earth  
1101 15<sup>th</sup> St NW, Washington DC 20005

February 27, 2025

Testimony in **SUPPORT of SB 806** – Prohibition on Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production

Before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Friends of the Earth U.S. and our more than 20,000 members and supporters in Maryland, we respectfully ask for your support of SB 806, which addresses the extreme confinement of farm animals by ensuring cage-free conditions. Not only will this create more humane living conditions for these animals, it will also help facilitate a more sustainable farming system.

Shifting to cage-free systems where animals have more space is a critical step away from the factory farming model that is contributing to the climate crisis, pollution, foodborne illness, unsafe communities and working conditions, and inhumane treatment of animals. Factory farms that confine millions of animals inside windowless warehouses produce a massive amount of waste that pollutes our land, water and air.

Communities living near factory farms on the Eastern Shore often experience noxious smells, deal with unsafe drinking water, and suffer from respiratory health impacts. Typically – including here in Maryland – it's lower-income families and communities of color that are harmed the most.

Shifting to cage-free systems has long been favored by organizations supporting family farms, sustainability, and rural communities. Many states have already passed similar laws; HB 834 would continue that momentum. We hope Maryland will pass SB 806 into law and further create a safer, more sustainable food system.

Thank you for your consideration of our position, and we respectfully urge a favorable report.

# **Christeen Fernando Written Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Christeen Fernando

Position: FAV

Christeen Fernando

104 S Symington Ave, Catonsville Maryland 21228

(443) 907-0922

ChristeenFernando14@gmail.com

February 11th, 2025

Dear Delegates and Senators,

As a concerned citizen I am writing to you to show my strong support for bill SB806/HB0834 banning battery cages in Maryland for egg laying hens. I was born in Maryland, attended Towson University and now work as an Autism Instructor in Maryland helping our adults with autism reach personal and behavioral goals.

As someone who has personally interacted with hens in Maryland, I have seen these animals act emotionally and intelligently. They would beg like a dog for food eaten around them and they purr like cats when happy. Seeing a child learn to respectfully care for these hens was a beautiful memory of mine that is very different from the lesson we are teaching when our laws allow hens to spend their entire lives stuffed into wire cages with unsanitary conditions.

According to Animal Equality the reality for most egg laying hens in Maryland is that they will spend their entire life in a cage in a factory farm setting experiencing “extreme pain, psychological stress from overcrowding” and “cannibalism by other hens” (<https://animalequality.org/maryland-free-hens-from-cages/>). In Maryland it is considered animal cruelty for cats and dogs to be in these conditions and it is time for the state to recognize that it is animal cruelty for any animal to spend its life this way.

According to The Humane League, many countries in Asia have already gone cage free including China, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.

Austria, Czechia, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands are also “ending all cages” (<https://thehumaneleague.org/article/cage-free-progress-worldwide>). These examples illustrate how many governments around the world have already recognized how unacceptable battery cages are, the need to update their policies and how possible it is to implement successfully.

Thank you for reviewing my input as a Maryland consumer. Please vote in favor of bill SB806/HB0834.

Christeen Fernando

## **Maryland cage-free bill testimony (Senate) - 2.25.**

Uploaded by: Claudia Lifton

Position: FAV



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Los Angeles, CA 90046  
☎ 866-632-6446  
[MercyForAnimals.org](http://MercyForAnimals.org)

February 25, 2025

Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the committee,

Mercy For Animals, a nonprofit organization with approximately 6,000 Maryland supporters dedicated to creating a more just and sustainable food system, commends the Maryland legislature for their consideration of SB806 and writes in support of this bill. The adoption of this anti-confinement legislation that allows egg-laying hens space to exhibit natural behaviors will position Maryland as a leader in animal welfare while also protecting consumer safety, and supporting local, family farmers who have made the switch to more humane farming methods.

### ***Joining States Leading the Fight on Farm Animal Welfare***

If enacted, Maryland would join states like California, Washington, Michigan, Oregon, and Massachusetts in creating a more compassionate food system for egg-laying hens, consumers, and family farms.

### ***Consumer Safety***

Confining egg-laying hens in cages puts Maryland's families at risk. Over eighteen studies have found that salmonella is more prevalent in cage egg production than in cage-free. One of the most comprehensive studies analyzing the health implications of cage versus cage-free egg facilities revealed that the risk of salmonella contamination was 25-times greater in facilities that confined hens to cages.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Supporting Family Farms***

Science confirms what common sense already tells us: that locking an animal in a cage so small she can barely move, causes her to suffer greatly. It's morally wrong, and numerous successful Maryland family farms that eschew such cruelty have shown that it's completely unnecessary. The cage-free conditions outlined in SB806 support responsible local farmers who are making the switch to more humane farming methods.

Mercy for Animals supports this important step forward in animal welfare, public health, and family farming. As such, we respectfully urge you to support SB806.

Sincerely,  
Mercy For Animals

Claudia Lifton  
State Policy Advisor  
[claudials@mercyforanimals.org](mailto:claudials@mercyforanimals.org)  
845.598.2409

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Task Force on Zoonoses Data Collection on the Analysis of the baseline study on the prevalence of Salmonella in holdings of laying hen flocks of Gallus gallus, The EFSA Journal (2007) 97

# **Cottingham Farm.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cleo Braver

Position: FAV

February 25, 2025

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

I am the owner-operator of Cottingham Farm in Easton. We are growers of heirloom vegetables and herbs; strictly organic-fed pastured heritage Berkshire Pork, Freedom Ranger chickens and chicken eggs; and carbon farmers on the banks of the Goldsborough Creek in Talbot County, Maryland. We believe we must return to the times of organically growing healthy and nutritious food for people to eat, which is why our chickens and egg-laying hens are entirely pasture-raised and able to engage in natural behaviors, like dustbathing. In addition, research has shown that eggs from hens kept in cages have higher instances of salmonella contamination.

For these reasons, we support SB0806 and request that the Members of the Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee support it as well.

Thank you,

Cleo Braver  
28038 Goldsborough Neck Road  
Easton, MD 21601  
cleo@cottinghamfarm.com

# **EggLayingHensSenate.pdf**

Uploaded by: Gary Whitten

Position: FAV

## **PLEASE SUPPORT: SB 806 (Agriculture) Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production – Prohibitions**

I am a Baltimore, Maryland resident (district 46), and, like most people who care about animals, am deeply concerned about the terrible and unnecessary suffering that egg laying hens are subjected to. Egg laying hens are typically crammed into wire cages so confining they can't even spread their wings and must live out their entire lives in a space comparable in size to a single page of paper, resulting in extreme stress and suffering which makes them susceptible to numerous health risks. Their health is so compromised they are given massive doses of antibiotics which greatly increases the risks of antibiotic resistant strains of disease developing, which may be a significant factor in the development of the current bird flu which continues to mutate and threatens to spread at even greater scale to chickens and other animals, including humans.

California's Proposition 12 (addressing Farm Animal Confinement) is highly successful legislation that addresses the suffering and health risks resulting from extreme confinement of egg laying hens and has been adopted, in different forms, by many states, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Colorado, Utah, Michigan, Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, and Nevada and eighteen countries, including the European Union, India, New Zealand, Israel, Norway, and Switzerland.

The impact on cost has been shown to be minimal and when diseases, such as bird flu are factored in, there is actually a significant cost benefit.

I strongly urge Maryland to join the other states in improving the lives of egg laying hens, reducing the health risks to all and respond to the public's concerns regarding the massive cruelty to and suffering of these innocent and gentle animals, who deserve so much better.

Thank you,

Gary Whitten

*2925 Elliott Street*

*Baltimore, MD 21224*

[whitteng@gmail.com](mailto:whitteng@gmail.com)

*860-729-3117*

# **THL MD Cage-Free Legislation Testimony Senate 2\_17**

Uploaded by: Hannah Truxell

Position: FAV

Bill: SB 806

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: Support

Date: February 25, 2025

Chair Feldman; Vice Chair Cheryl C. Kagan; and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of our Maryland supporters, The Humane League (THL) supports SB 806, which would require, after a phase-in period, that all eggs produced or sold within the state come from cage-free operations. This bill aligns with a growing trend seen in other states, enjoying bipartisan support for its commitment to improving the well-being of egg-laying hens. With industry-written standards and guidelines, SB 806 ensures a responsible transition to cage-free systems, allowing hens to engage in natural behaviors. Not only does SB 806 contribute to heightened animal welfare, but it also addresses critical concerns by reducing food safety risks associated with confined conditions. By keeping egg costs down, it makes safe and humane eggs accessible to all Marylanders. Supporting SB 806 is a crucial step toward fostering a more ethical and sustainable approach to egg production in Maryland. THL urges committee members to lend their support to SB 806.

## **Ensuring Safer, More Affordable, and Humane Egg Production for Marylanders**

Marylanders deserve eggs that are produced in a safer, more affordable, and humane manner. The growing public opposition to confining farm animals in extremely restrictive cages makes it evident that the future of egg production is moving towards cage-free systems. SB 806 would ensure that all eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free operations adhering to industry guidelines. This proposed bill aims to enhance food safety, promote animal welfare, and establish a business-friendly regulatory framework.

## **Bipartisan Support for Passing Similar Legislation**

Maryland's cage-free egg bill aligns with other states. Over the past several years, red, blue and purple states have passed similar measures, like California, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Arizona. Utah and Rhode Island have also passed cage-free egg standards. These measures all garnered strong bipartisan support.

## **Industry-Written Standards**

The industry-written standards outlined in SB 806 for cage-free systems mandate at least 1 square foot for birds in aviary-style facilities and at least 1.5 square feet for birds in floor systems. This legislation would enable Maryland's more than 2 million egg-laying hens to engage in important natural behaviors such as flapping their wings, walking, perching, dustbathing, and laying eggs in nest boxes, aligning with guidelines from the United Egg Producers.

### **Reduction of Food Safety Risks**

SB 806 not only increases animal welfare but also reduces food safety risks. The confinement of millions of hens in the United States egg industry in small, barren cages has been associated with higher rates of salmonella. Cage-free systems, as evidence indicates, can help mitigate these risks.

### **Keeps Costs Down**

Moreover, the focus of this bill solely on eggs keeps costs down and does not impact other sectors of animal agriculture. The production cost differential between cage and cage-free housing systems is minimal, estimated to be less than a couple of pennies per egg. As cage-free eggs become more commonplace, retail markup is expected to decline, presenting consumers with affordable options.

### **Commercial Egg-Buyers Have Already Transitioned to Cage-Free Eggs**

The demand for change is evident among commercial egg-buyers, with major companies like Costco, McDonald's, Burger King, and many others already using or transitioning to 100% cage-free eggs. All of these companies will have gone cage-free by the implementation date in SB 806.

In conclusion, I urge each committee member to stand with us in supporting SB 806. Together, we can ensure that Maryland remains at the forefront of promoting ethical standards in egg production. I sincerely thank you for your time and consideration of this vital issue.

Sincerely,

Hannah Truxell  
Senior Policy Counsel

# Hayden K Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Hayden Kessinger

Position: FAV

Maryland General Assembly

Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee

Written Testimony in Support of SB806/HB0834

Dear Senators,

My name is Hayden Kessinger, and I was born and raised on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Chicken farming is a way of life here, and I've seen firsthand how deeply connected our state is to this industry. That's why I strongly support SB806/HB0834, which would ban the sale of eggs from battery-caged hens. Maryland has always been a leader in agriculture, and it's important that we keep up with the times as the industry moves toward more humane and sustainable practices.

Growing up, I couldn't ignore the reality of what happens to chickens in our state. I've watched transport trucks drive down our roads, packed with birds crammed so tightly together they can barely move, their feathers torn out from rubbing against the metal bars. I've seen the massive industrial farms where tens of thousands of birds are confined in dark, overcrowded sheds. And I know that the conditions for egg-laying hens in battery cages are just as bad—if not worse. These hens spend their entire lives in cages so small they can't even spread their wings, let alone engage in natural behaviors like dust bathing or foraging.

But Maryland is better than this. Our state has always had a proud agricultural tradition, and we should be leading the way, not falling behind. Many major food companies, grocery stores, and restaurants have already pledged to switch to cage-free eggs because they know that's where the market is headed. States like California, Washington, and Massachusetts have passed similar laws, and producers are adapting. If Maryland doesn't keep up, we risk being left behind as the industry modernizes.

This bill is about ensuring Maryland's agricultural future stays strong. The poultry industry has always evolved with the times, and this is the next step. I urge you to pass SB806/HB0834 and help move Maryland forward.

Sincerely,

Hayden Kessinger, 30010 Schwaninger Road, Easton, MD 21601

# **Amaranth Acres in Support of Cage-Free.pdf**

Uploaded by: Indhu Balasubramaniam

Position: FAV

Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 25, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the committee:

Amaranth Acres is a family-owned farmed in Dickerson; we come from a long line of farmers. We're proud to produce eggs from pasture-raised hens and ducks. The quality of the eggs, the color and the texture are all better because of the way we treat our birds.

Cage-free egg farming is the future. It is more humane, produces safer eggs (since caged housing has been associated with higher salmonella risks) and meets the growing consumer demand for ethically raised food.

I hope the committee will support SB 806 for the sake of our animals, our consumers, and the integrity of Maryland agriculture.

Sincerely,

Indhu Balasubramaniam  
Amaranth Acres  
22814 W Harris Rd  
Dickerson, MD 20842  
amaranthacres.com

# **MD Battery Egg Bill Testimony, 2025 Feb.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jareb Gleckel

Position: FAV

Bill: SB 806  
Committee: Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee  
Position: Favorable  
Date: February 25, 2025

My name is Jareb Gleckel, and I am a Staff Attorney for Animal Outlook (AO), a nonprofit animal protection organization. I am testifying in support of SB 806 for many of the same reasons you will hear others present — battery cages are inhumane to animals and also present food safety and public health risks. What I believe I can uniquely offer today is a specific factual look at the realities of battery cage production, including here in Maryland.

AO has conducted multiple investigations of battery egg facilities in Maryland.

- In 2001, numerous occasions in 2002, 2003, and then again in 2005, AO entered Maryland battery cage egg facilities where hundreds of thousands of birds are warehoused. AO documented the following repeatedly across these investigations:
  - Hens crowded in barren wire cages, restricting even simple movements
  - Animals in the lower rows of cages forced to live in the excrement of birds above them
  - Severe and widespread feather loss
  - Birds with severe and untreated illness and injuries deprived of veterinary care, including multiple disfiguring swollen and infected eyes.
  - Birds trapped in the bars of their cages or under other birds, immobilized and unable to access food or water
  - Widespread dead birds, with live birds forced to live in cages with their decomposing cage mates

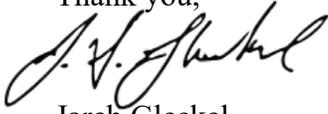
While I have highlighted the Maryland egg industry, AO's investigations of other battery cage egg facilities reveal almost identical conditions and issues.

- In 2005, 2007, and 2009, AO investigated battery egg facilities in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Minnesota, and documented:
  - Once again, the same kind of overcrowding in cages, severely decomposed birds with live birds in cages, sick and injured birds with no veterinary care, feces landing on animals, stuck birds with no access to food and water, and escaped or abandoned birds in the manure pits or aisles.

- Each worker being responsible for between 125,000 and 225,000 birds, with one worker saying they could spend no more than an hour per house looking for dead birds

When it comes to battery cages, cruelty and suffering is the rule, not the exception.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. V. Gleckel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jareb" and last name "Gleckel" clearly distinguishable.

Jareb Gleckel

Staff Attorney

Email: [jgleckel@animaloutlook.org](mailto:jgleckel@animaloutlook.org)

Appendix: Select Photos



Cecilton, MD: Bird is seen with a severely swollen and infected eye



Cecilton, MD: birds crowded in a battery cage with severe feather loss

# Testimony for MD SB0806.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenna Linhart

Position: FAV

My name is Jenna Linhart and I'm a resident of Frostburg, MD. I would like to voice my support for the SB0806, and in fact, voice that I actually wish the timeline was sooner and that the parameters to protect quality of life for chickens/hens were even stronger.

I wish it was mandatory for every person voting on this legislation to first tour one or more of these caged facilities. Witnessing a living thing in pro-longed agony, smelling the result of intense density and confinement, and seeing the lack of respect given to these creatures (that are providing food for us) may change the hearts and minds of the "they're just chickens" folks.

### Animal welfare:

Every time I drive by a windowless chicken barn, my heart sinks. I don't need to see through the walls to know what's on the other side. You can just smell the unmistakable stink of misery and suffering. I've not set foot inside one myself, but I've seen videos of the conditions inside. I've smelled the unmistakable pungent odor of too many living things being treated as though they don't have an inherent right to be treated with respect. I've read about the incredible concentration of birds inside, that some are even crushed to death as result. While labels like "cage-free" and "free-range" may make us feel better, they really just mean slightly less torture – but sadly if that is the best option on the table, at least it's just that, slightly less torture.

Factory farming might be a common practice these days, but it doesn't make it right. Animals being treated as things instead of sentient creatures is far from the way things used to be done.

As a chicken owner myself, I've experienced their unique personalities first hand. My birds come when they are called, a few wait outside the glass door for me to come outside, I even had one that would jump in the hammock with my dog and I and go to sleep on my chest. I recently saw a before and after picture of a hen who came from a cage egg-laying factory (I

Not your typical before and after! Hei hei the chicken 2 months after being rescued from cage farming



Reddit  
After only 3 months in a ...



Reddit  
Not your typical before a...



BackYard Chickens  
Rescued Battery Hens ! ...



YouTube  
Rescue Hens 4 | before ...



Tara Beaver Coronado  
Ex-Battery Hens — Tara...



PORTSMOUTH POINT  
Why Chickens Are Unde...



Reddit  
Before and after rescuin...



Reddit  
Same hen, 4 months lat...



Bitchin' Chickens



will not call them farms). The first picture was of the day she was removed from there, and then another picture a few months later. I don't need to describe what 2 months of being treated like a living thing can do to a creature...in fact, I came across a number of these before and afters...see below.

#### Quality of Product:

When my birds are laying enough for my family, I buy other locally sourced pasture raised eggs. When I can't find locally sourced, I then only buy pasture raised eggs from bigger stores. All of these options blow factory produced eggs out of the water in terms of taste and quality. The color is night and day too.

#### Environmental and public health considerations:

I'm an environmental scientist and as one, I understand the interconnectedness of the socio-environmental world and the impacts that anthropogenic practices can have on environmental processes. The industrialization of raising livestock raises so many environmental and public health concerns. Here in Maryland, our Chesapeake Bay is one of the main life bloods of the economy. Pollution from these egg laying facilities jeopardizes water quality in the Bay and the freshwater sources before it. Crammed, dirty, disrespectful living conditions for egg laying hens increases the likelihood that they are in poor physical condition, and that they are in higher densities. Both of these factors can play a role in the spread of diseases. Not only does the risk of disease increase the potential need for mass slaughtering of egg hens to contain outbreak, it also puts public health at risk and the health of important wildlife populations.

Thank you,  
Jenna Linhart  
Frostburg, MD

## **SB 806**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Position: FAV

1250 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 530  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 234-5570

Interviews: 750 Likely 2026 Voters, including an oversample of 150 voters in SDs 8,9,28,33 (201 total interviews, weighted down proportionally)  
Dates: December 9-15, 2024

**FINAL**

Study #14949  
MD Humane Society Survey  
December 2024

**Please note: all results are shown as percentages unless otherwise stated.**

Gender. Record respondent's gender.

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Male.....	45	46
Female .....	55	54
Nonbinary/other.....	0	0

QSRV1. First, are you currently registered to vote in Maryland?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Yes, registered .....	100	100
No, not registered..	-	-
Not sure.....	-	-

Party registration from FILE		
	All Voters	Targeted SDs
dem .....	54	50
ind .....	0	0
lib .....	1	0
nop.....	19	23
oth .....	1	0
rep.....	25	27

MEDIAT. Does anyone in this household work for a radio station, a television station, a newspaper, an advertising agency, a market research firm, or as an active political campaign worker?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
No .....	100	100
Yes.....	-	-
Not sure .....	-	-

Q2024V. Did you vote in last month's election for president?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Yes, voted .....	93	96
No, did not vote .....	7	4
Not sure.....	0	0

**(ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO SAID "YES, VOTED" IN Q2024V.)**

QS24pres. Did you vote for Kamala Harris, the Democrat, or Donald Trump, the Republican?

(IF RESPONDENT DECLINES TO SAY HOW HE/SHE VOTED, SAY:) This survey is being done for research purposes only. Your willingness to say how you voted is really important for ensuring the accuracy of our research, and we promise that we will always maintain the privacy and confidentiality of your responses. In the election for president, did you vote for (READ LIST)?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Kamala Harris .....	61	54
Donald Trump .....	35	39
Another candidate .....	4	7
Did not vote .....	0	0
Not sure/refused.....	0	0

LV1. I know it is a long way off, but what are the chances that you will vote in the November 2026 elections for U.S. Congress, governor of Maryland, and state legislative offices--are you certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances fifty-fifty, or do you think you will not vote?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs	
Certain to vote .....	83	86	
Probably will vote .....	11	8	
Chances are 50-50 I will vote .....	6	6	
Will not vote.....	-	-	<b>TERMINATE</b>
Not sure.....	-	-	<b>TERMINATE</b>

Q1aTH. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Democratic majority in the state legislature is doing? (IF "NOT SURE," ASK:) Well, do you lean more toward approve or disapprove?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Approve .....	38	34
Approve (lean) .....	10	8
Disapprove .....	41	48
Disapprove (lean) .....	3	1
Not sure .....	7	10
<b>Total Approve</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Total Disapprove</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>49</b>

Q1bTH. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Wes Moore is doing as governor of Maryland? (IF "NOT SURE," ASK:) Well, do you lean more toward approve or disapprove?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Approve .....	53	47
Approve (lean) .....	6	3
Disapprove .....	29	34
Disapprove (lean) .....	5	6
Not sure .....	8	9
<b>Total Approve</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Total Disapprove</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>41</b>

Q2abTH. In the November 2026 election for Maryland state legislature in your district, which candidate are you more likely to vote for-- the Democrat or the Republican? (IF 'NOT SURE,' ASK:) Well, all other things being equal, are you more likely to vote for the Democrat or the Republican?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Democrat .....	52	45
Democrat (lean) .....	4	5
Republican .....	28	32
Republican (lean) .....	3	2
Not sure .....	13	16
<b>Total Democrat</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Total Republican</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>

Moving ahead with the survey ...

Q3a. How would you rate the financial situation for you and your family these days—excellent, good, not so good, or poor?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Excellent .....	15	14
Good .....	50	53
Not so good .....	26	24
Poor .....	8	9
Not sure .....	0	0
<b>Total Excellent/Good</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Total Not so good/Poor</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>

Q3b. Thinking of the economy in your household, are you getting ahead, staying the same, or falling behind?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Getting ahead .....	18	17
Staying the same...	50	54
Falling behind .....	32	29
Not sure .....	0	0

Q4. Next, let me read you some items that are typically in grocery stores and supermarkets. For each item, please tell me whether you think the average price is too high, too low, or about right.

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE SAYING TOO HIGH (ALL VOTERS)

	Too high	Too low	About right	Not sure
<b>Meat and poultry</b>				
All Voters.....	77	1	16	7
Targeted SDs.....	73	1	20	6
<b>A carton of eggs**</b>				
All Voters.....	75	0	22	3
Targeted SDs.....	71	2	23	4
<b>Eggs*</b>				
All Voters.....	73	0	16	11
Targeted SDs.....	71	1	19	9
<b>Milk**</b>				
All Voters.....	61	1	27	11
Targeted SDs.....	52	1	36	11
<b>Bread*</b>				
All Voters.....	58	1	32	10
Targeted SDs.....	62	1	28	10
<b>Gas</b>				
All Voters.....	57	2	37	4
Targeted SDs.....	55	2	40	3

\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

\*\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

Q5. Now I'm going to read you some proposals that might be included in the upcoming Maryland legislative session. For each one, please tell me whether it is something you would strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose.

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE SAYING TOTAL FAVOR (ALL VOTERS)

	Total Favor	Total Oppose	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Not sure
<b>Provide free breakfast and lunch to all K through twelve public school students</b>							
All Voters.....	78	21	55	23	9	12	1
Targeted SDs.....	73	27	49	23	15	12	0
<b>Require all eggs sold or produced in Maryland to come from cage-free operations</b>							
All Voters.....	66	32	34	33	14	17	2
Targeted SDs.....	65	32	26	39	17	15	3
<b>Raise state taxes to make sure Maryland's comprehensive education reform plan, also known as the Blueprint for Maryland's future, is adequately funded</b>							
All Voters.....	43	55	15	27	19	37	2
Targeted SDs.....	37	61	15	22	16	45	2

Due to rounding, not all tables will add to 100. When totaled responses differ from individual responses, totaled responses are more precise.

Q6a. Let me read you a little more information about the current egg production system. A caged system is where hens are confined with multiple other birds in wire cages, with an average of less than half a square foot of space per bird. A cage-free facility is where hens are housed in barns without cages.

The cage-free Legislation before the state legislature would require that after a phase-in period that ends in five years, all eggs sold or produced in Maryland come from cage-free facilities that comply with the egg industry's own guidelines. This legislation would only affect the production of eggs and not impact the production of chicken for meat.

Based on what you have just heard, what is your reaction to this cage-free egg legislation--is this something you would strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose?\*

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Strongly favor .....	43	38
Somewhat favor .....	29	29
Somewhat oppose .....	12	21
Strongly oppose .....	11	6
Not sure.....	6	7
<b>Total Favor</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Total Oppose</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>

\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

Q6b. Let me read you a little more information about the cage-free Legislation before the state legislature. It would require that after a phase-in period that ends in five years, all eggs sold or produced in Maryland come from cage-free facilities that comply with the egg industry's own guidelines. This legislation would only affect the production of eggs and not impact the production of chicken for meat.

Based on what you have just heard, what is your reaction to this cage-free egg legislation--is this something you would strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose?\*

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Strongly favor .....	33	25
Somewhat favor .....	28	34
Somewhat oppose .....	11	14
Strongly oppose .....	18	19
Not sure.....	9	8
<b>Total Favor</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Total Oppose</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>34</b>

\*\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

**(COMBINE Q6a AND Q6b RESPONSES)**

Q6abTH. **(FORM A)** Let me read you a little more information about the current egg production system. A caged system is where hens are confined with multiple other birds in wire cages, with an average of less than half a square foot of space per bird. A cage-free facility is where hens are housed in barns without cages.

The cage-free Legislation before the state legislature would require that after a phase-in period that ends in five years, all eggs sold or produced in Maryland come from cage-free facilities that comply with the egg industry's own guidelines. This legislation would only affect the production of eggs and not impact the production of chicken for meat.

**(FORM B)** Let me read you a little more information about the cage-free Legislation before the state legislature. It would require that after a phase-in period that ends in five years, all eggs sold or produced in Maryland come from cage-free facilities that comply with the egg industry's own guidelines. This legislation would only affect the production of eggs and not impact the production of chicken for meat.

Based on what you have just heard, what is your reaction to this cage free egg legislation--is this something you would strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Strongly favor .....	38	31
Somewhat favor .....	28	31
Somewhat oppose .....	12	17
Strongly oppose .....	14	13
Not sure.....	7	7
<b>Total Favor</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Total Oppose</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>

**(ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO SAY “FAVOR” ON Q6abTH)**

Q6c. Why do you favor a proposal to require all eggs sold or produced in Maryland to come from cage-free operations?

(THEN ASK:) Why else do you favor this cage-free egg legislation?

*THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE (ALL VOTERS)*

	All Voters	Targeted SDs	Form A – Background info		Form B – No info	
			All Voters	Targeted SDs	All Voters	Targeted SDs
<b>NET FAVOR</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>86</b>
Humane/ethical treatment of animals, cruelty free .....	42	35	47	46	35	24
Healthier for humans .....	27	25	25	20	30	30
Results in healthier/happier chickens, less disease .....	22	20	22	20	22	20
Caging is unnatural, too restrictive, against factory farming ...	17	17	20	23	14	12
Improves the quality of eggs, flavor .....	10	14	9	12	12	15
Better option, favor cage free system .....	7	9	5	8	8	10
Better for the environment .....	5	3	4	0	5	6
Against the use of antibiotics, chemicals .....	4	6	2	5	6	8
Provides industry guidelines, standardization .....	2	2	2	1	3	3
Lower the price of eggs .....	2	2	2	1	1	3
Increase production of eggs .....	1	5	1	8	2	1
Support local farms .....	1	2	1	0	2	3
Favor based on past experience farming, tending chickens...	1	2	0	2	1	2
All other reasons to favor .....	2	1	1	0	4	2
<b>NET OPPOSE</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
Result in higher prices .....	3	2	2	2	3	1
Don't care about this issue, not a priority .....	1	1	1	0	2	2
Government overregulation .....	1	1	1	1	1	0
All other reasons to oppose .....	1	2	2	1	1	3
All other comments	2	2	1	2	3	3
Would prefer pasture raised, free range method	2	3	2	3	2	4
Need to do more research	2	3	0	3	4	4
Don't know, no response	3	7	3	8	3	7

*Due to rounding, not all tables will add to 100. When totaled responses differ from individual responses, totaled responses are more precise.*

**(ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO SAY “OPPOSE” ON Q6abTH)**

Q6d. Why do you oppose a proposal to require all eggs sold or produced in Maryland to come from cage-free operations?

(THEN ASK:) Why else do you oppose this cage-free egg legislation?

*THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE*

	All Voters	Targeted SDs	Form A – Background info		Form B – No info	
			All Voters	Targeted SDs	All Voters	Targeted SDs
<b>NET OPPOSE</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>86</b>
Impact on prices, raise costs .....	47	54	46	58	48	52
Government overreach, overregulation .....	27	25	29	17	25	31
Believe in free enterprise, letting the public choose .....	15	8	11	4	18	11
No difference in the quality of eggs .....	10	9	8	5	12	11
Don't care about this issue, not a priority.....	9	11	14	16	6	7
Cage free doesn't mean that the chickens are free ranging, still in cages.....	8	12	7	10	8	13
Hurt farmers, local egg producers .....	5	4	7	6	4	3
Unnecessary, waste of time and money.....	5	5	4	3	5	7
Will not result in healthier chickens, more disease .....	4	1	2	0	5	1
Will affect the poor.....	4	5	1	11	5	0
Requires more land use .....	2	0	1	0	3	0
Will lower egg production .....	2	1	2	0	2	2
All other reasons to oppose.....	8	9	4	2	10	14
<b>NET FAVOR</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Agree in principle that caging chickens is cruel, animal rights..	4	3	1	0	6	6
All other reasons to favor .....	3	3	4	4	2	2
All comments	2	3	2	4	3	2
Need to do more research	2	6	1	0	2	10
Don't know, no response	3	1	3	0	3	2

*Due to rounding, not all tables will add to 100. When totaled responses differ from individual responses, totaled responses are more precise.*

Q7a. Next, I'm going to mention some things you might learn about the legislation to require all eggs sold or produced in Maryland to come from cage-free operations. For each item, please tell me whether it makes you MORE likely or LESS likely to support the proposed legislation.

*THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE SAYING MORE LIKELY (ALL VOTERS)*

	More likely	Less likely	No difference/ depends	Not sure
<b>The production cost differential between cage and cage-free housing systems is minimal</b>				
All Voters .....	55	15	29	2
Targeted SDs .....	58	17	23	1
<b>This legislation would simply require large egg producers to follow the egg industry's own cage-free standards</b>				
All Voters .....	51	18	31	1
Targeted SDs .....	54	17	28	1
<b>The legislation to require cage-free facilities would only become law after a phase-in period of five years.*</b>				
All Voters .....	45	13	42	0
Targeted SDs .....	38	12	50	0
<b>This legislation would ONLY apply to a handful of large-scale producers and NOT apply to small and family farmers with fewer than five thousand hens.**</b>				
All Voters .....	40	23	35	2
Targeted SDs .....	48	23	27	2
<b>The legislation to require cage-free facilities would only become law in 2030 after a phase-in period.**</b>				
All Voters .....	39	21	38	2
Targeted SDs .....	43	20	36	1
<b>This legislation would NOT apply to small and family farmers with fewer than five thousand hens.*</b>				
All Voters .....	38	27	35	0
Targeted SDs .....	34	30	36	0
<b>This legislation gives hens the space to spread their wings by having access to the entire barn, but not access to the outdoors</b>				
All Voters .....	35	31	33	1
Targeted SDs .....	34	30	35	1
<b>This legislation would not impact any other sector of animal agriculture, including the production of chicken for meat</b>				
All Voters .....	33	21	45	1
Targeted SDs .....	31	25	42	2

\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

\*\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

Q7b. Based on what you have just heard, what is your reaction to this cage-free egg legislation--is this something you would strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs	Initial ask (Q6abTH)	
			All Voters	Targeted SDs
Strongly favor.....	35	27	38	31
Somewhat favor.....	34	39	28	31
Somewhat oppose.....	10	13	12	17
Strongly oppose.....	14	15	14	13
Not sure.....	8	6	7	7
<b>Total Favor</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Total Oppose</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>

Q7cdTH. In the November 2026 election for Maryland state legislature in your district, which candidate are you more likely to vote for-- the Democrat who supports this cage free egg legislation or the Republican who opposes this cage free egg legislation? (IF 'NOT SURE,' ASK:) Well, all other things being equal, are you more likely to vote for the Democrat who supports this cage free egg legislation or the Republican who opposes this cage free egg legislation?\*

	All Voters	Targeted SDs	Initial ask (Q2abTH)	
			All Voters	Targeted SDs
Democrat .....	60	53	52	45
Democrat (lean) .....	5	7	4	5
Republican .....	23	25	28	32
Republican (lean).....	2	3	3	2
Not sure .....	10	12	13	16
<b>Total Democrat</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Total Republican</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>

\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

Q8a. Next, let me read you some criticisms that people might give to OPPOSE this cage-free egg legislation. For each one, please tell me whether you consider this a very strong reason, a fairly strong reason, a medium reason, or a weak reason to oppose this cage-free egg legislation.

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE SAYING STRONG REASON (ALL VOTERS)

	<b>Total Strong Reason</b>	Very strong reason	Fairly strong reason	Medium reason	Weak reason	Not sure
<b>(COSTS) With the price of eggs already too high, this will raise prices even higher. On average, cage free eggs are currently more than four dollars a dozen, and requiring cage-free for ALL eggs would further increase the price of eggs, burdening families that are already struggling with the high costs of necessities such as gas and utilities.</b>						
All Voters .....	<b>63</b>	37	26	18	17	2
Targeted SDs.....	<b>64</b>	44	20	17	18	1
<b>(JOBS) This legislation would cost farmers millions of dollars to convert their facilities to become cage free, potentially costing good paying jobs in the egg industry and hurting Maryland's economy.</b>						
All Voters .....	<b>55</b>	33	22	20	23	2
Targeted SDs.....	<b>58</b>	33	24	21	21	1
<b>(Health aspect) This legislation could endanger public health because eggs in cage-free environments can have more exposure to Avian flu, and fecal matter, potentially leading to the spread of bacteria and disease, which could impact the public.</b>						
All Voters .....	<b>51</b>	30	21	20	27	1
Targeted SDs.....	<b>44</b>	23	21	20	35	1

Due to rounding, not all tables will add to 100. When totaled responses differ from individual responses, totaled responses are more precise.

Q8b. On the other side of the coin, let me read you some reasons that people might give to SUPPORT this cage-free egg legislation. For each one, please tell me whether you consider this a very strong reason, a fairly strong reason, a medium reason, or a weak reason to support this cage-free egg legislation.

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE SAYING STRONG REASON (ALL VOTERS)

	Total Strong Reason	Very strong reason	Fairly strong reason	Medium reason	Weak reason	Not sure
<b>(Animal welfare) On many egg factory farms, hens are crammed into cages so small the birds can't spread their wings. Each bird is given less space than the dimensions of an iPad on which to live her entire life. She's forced to eat, sleep, and defecate in the same space and is denied almost everything that is natural to her. This bill would allow hens to perform important natural behaviors like walking and flapping their wings.*</b>						
All Voters.....	75	58	17	12	13	0
Targeted SDs.....	77	57	19	10	13	0
<b>(Public Health) Confining birds in cramped, filthy cages can increase the spread of dangerous bacteria and viruses, including Salmonella, which can be deadly if ingested by infants or the elderly.**</b>						
All Voters.....	74	56	18	13	12	1
Targeted SDs.....	68	58	10	16	15	1
<b>(Food safety) Not only are cages cruel for the birds, but research shows that locking hens in cages increases the risk of Salmonella contamination, a bacteria that can be lethal, especially in children and the elderly. Evidence shows that cage-free systems reduce Salmonella risks and leading consumer advocacy organizations have supported cage-free reforms.*</b>						
All Voters.....	74	48	26	14	11	1
Targeted SDs.....	76	46	29	14	9	2
<b>(COSTS McDonalds) The price of cage-free eggs is currently artificially inflated by retailers who think they can charge more for a premium product. If cage-free eggs become the standard, this artificial markup will actually go down. It's estimated that by shifting to cage-free production the price of eggs will only go up between less than one cent to a few pennies per egg. In fact, when McDonald's announced it was going cage-free, it stated it won't raise prices at all.*</b>						
All Voters.....	72	51	22	10	16	1
Targeted SDs.....	67	45	22	10	22	2

\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).  
\*\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

Q8b cont'd.

	<b>Total Strong Reason</b>	Very strong reason	Fairly strong reason	Medium reason	Weak reason	Not sure
<b>(Wrong) This legislation is needed because it is cruel to confine farm animals in cramped, overcrowded cages, and this practice is inhumane and just plain wrong. These hens are raised in factory-like conditions under extreme confinement where they are kept in tiny spaces that are so small they can't even spread their wings for their whole lives.**</b>						
All Voters.....	<b>63</b>	49	14	18	18	1
Targeted SDs.....	<b>68</b>	46	22	11	20	1
<b>(COSTS per year) The price of cage-free eggs is currently artificially inflated by retailers who think they can charge more for a premium product. If cage-free eggs become the standard this artificial markup will actually go down. It's estimated that by shifting to cage-free production the price of eggs will only go up between less than one cent to a few pennies per egg. The average American consumer consumes about 200 eggs per year, meaning at 3 cents per egg, the increase in cost for eggs will only be about \$6 a year.**</b>						
All Voters.....	<b>61</b>	43	18	17	21	1
Targeted SDs.....	<b>66</b>	42	24	13	19	1
<b>(Industry) More than 40% of the hens used for eggs are already cage free. More than 200 of the country's largest food companies have committed switching to a 100% cage-free egg supply. This includes McDonald's, Burger King, Costco, Kraft Foods, General Mills and Aramark, along with Maryland-based Sodexo and Marriott.**</b>						
All Voters.....	<b>60</b>	37	23	22	17	1
Targeted SDs.....	<b>59</b>	38	21	18	21	1
<b>(Other states) Similar legislation has passed in nearly a dozen states, including Arizona, Nevada, and Michigan, all with strong bipartisan support.*</b>						
All Voters.....	<b>56</b>	34	22	19	25	1
Targeted SDs.....	<b>49</b>	27	21	20	30	2

\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A).

\*\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

Q9a. Based on everything we have discussed, what is your reaction to this cage-free egg legislation--is this something you would strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs	Informed ask (Q7b)		Initial ask (Q6abTH)	
			All Voters	Targeted SDs	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Strongly favor .....	38	39	35	27	38	31
Somewhat favor .....	27	30	34	39	28	31
Somewhat oppose.....	13	10	10	13	12	17
Strongly oppose .....	15	15	14	15	14	13
Not sure.....	7	6	8	6	7	7
<b>Total Favor</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Total Oppose</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>

Q9bcTH. In the November 2026 election for Maryland state legislature in your district, which candidate are you more likely to vote for-- the Democrat who supports this cage free egg legislation or the Republican who opposes this cage free egg legislation? (IF 'NOT SURE,' PROBE) Well, all other things being equal, are you more likely to vote for the Democrat who supports this cage free egg legislation or the Republican who opposes this cage free egg legislation?\*

	All Voters	Targeted SDs	Pre-messaging ask (Q7cdTH)		Initial ask (Q2abTH)	
			All Voters	Targeted SDs	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Democrat .....	53	48	60	53	52	45
Democrat (lean).....	4	2	5	7	4	5
Republican.....	30	31	23	25	28	32
Republican (lean) .....	2	4	2	3	3	2
Not sure .....	12	15	10	12	13	16
<b>Total Democrat</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Total Republican</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>

\*\* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B).

FACTUALS: Now I am going to ask you a few questions for statistical purposes only.

PID5THa. How would you describe your overall point of view in terms of the political parties? Would you say that you are a strong Republican, leaning Republican, completely independent, leaning Democratic, or a strong Democrat?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
A strong Republican .....	13	16
Leaning Republican.....	14	13
Completely independent.....	21	23
Leaning Democratic.....	20	18
A strong Democrat.....	31	29
Not sure .....	0	1
<b>Total Republican</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Total Democrat</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>47</b>

Qinc2. If you added together the yearly income of all the members of your family who were living at home last year, what would the total be? I'm going to read some income ranges. Please stop me when I reach the range for your family--less than ten thousand dollars, between ten thousand dollars and twenty thousand dollars, between twenty thousand dollars and thirty thousand dollars, between thirty thousand dollars and forty thousand dollars, between forty thousand dollars and fifty thousand dollars, between fifty thousand dollars and seventy-five thousand dollars, between seventy-five thousand dollars and one hundred thousand dollars, between one hundred thousand dollars and one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, or more than one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Less than \$10,000 .....	1	1
\$10,000 to \$20,000.....	3	3
\$20,001 to \$30,000.....	5	2
\$30,001 to \$40,000.....	5	4
\$40,001 to \$50,000.....	5	6
\$50,001 to \$75,000.....	13	12
\$75,001 to \$100,000.....	15	9
\$100,001 to \$150,000.....	20	19
\$150,001 or more .....	31	41
Not sure/refused .....	2	2

QF1. Are you primarily responsible for grocery shopping for your household?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Yes.....	77	75
No .....	23	25
Not sure .....	0	0

QAGE. For statistical purposes only and to ensure that we have a representative sample, in what year were you born?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
18-24 .....	8	12
25-29 .....	6	3
30-34 .....	6	5
35-39 .....	10	10
40-44 .....	7	10
45-49 .....	8	6
50-54 .....	7	9
55-59 .....	10	11
60-64 .....	10	14
65-69 .....	9	4
70-74 .....	9	6
75 or older .....	11	11
Not sure/refused....	0	0

RaceTH. Again, for statistical purposes only, are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? And to ensure we have a representative sample, what is your race—white, Black or African American, Asian, or something else? (IF “SOMETHING ELSE,” ASK:) How would you describe your race?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
American Indian or Native American .	1	1
Asian or Asian American.....	3	6
Black or African American.....	29	29
Hispanic.....	5	5
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander ...	0	0
White .....	60	56
Another race .....	1	3
Not sure/refused .....	1	0

QSedu. What is the last grade of school or level of education you completed?

(IF INITIAL RESPONSE IS "REFUSED" OR "NOT SURE," SAY:) As a reminder, your answer is completely confidential and is being used for statistical purposes only. With that in mind, would you tell me the last grade you completed in school?

	All Voters	Targeted SDs
Did not graduate high school .....	1	2
High school graduate .....	22	12
Vocational training/technical school .....	3	4
Some college, no degree .....	15	14
2-year college/associate degree .....	9	8
4-year college/bachelor's degree .....	26	29
Master's, PhD, or professional degree (MD, law, MBA) ....	25	31
Not sure/refused .....	0	0

# **Jennifer Voelker Testimony in Support of (SB806\_H**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Voelker

Position: FAV

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

**2025 ASPCA Testimony Supporting MD SB 806.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kara Shannon

Position: FAV



**Date:** Thursday, February 27, 2025

**Time and Location:** 1:00 pm in the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**To:** Sen. Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair  
Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**Submitted by:** Nancy Perry, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, ASPCA

**RE:** Support of SB 806: Agriculture – Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), the over 25,000 Maryland citizens we represent and our more than 2 million supporters nationwide, we want to voice our strong support for SB 806. The ASPCA has provided more than \$1.4 million directly to Maryland organizations that work to protect animals in the last decade and as important as those grants are, we feel strongly that it is essential to prevent harm to animals by enacting positive policies like HB 834. This bill would improve the welfare of millions of laying hens, align Maryland with the broader movement to transition to higher-welfare farming systems and ensure that farmers in the state can lead the way in meeting the ever-growing demand for cage-free eggs.

Public surveys have repeatedly shown that citizens are concerned about the welfare of farm animals. This concern drives increasing demand for more humane options and has led more than 200 companies to commit to adopting cage-free systems, including companies like Dollar Tree, Costco, Target, McDonald's and Walmart, as well as Maryland-based Sodexo and Marriott. Recently, McDonald's announced that every one of its locations in the United States is now 100% cage-free, demonstrating the efficacy of this policy, and the company has stated it would not raise prices for consumers as a result of this shift. State legislatures have also responded to this demand as ten other states have banned the confinement of laying hens in battery cages.

[Egg industry data](#) and consumer data shows that egg prices in California—which has a nearly identical law prohibiting the sale of eggs from hens in cages—changed by less than a penny per egg once the law was implemented. Other research has shown a *production cost* difference of only a couple pennies per egg. In addition, the hidden costs of such inhumane confinement are increased cruelty and food safety risks. It's animals and consumers who are currently paying those hidden prices.

SB 806 is a common-sense bill, offering clear space and enrichment requirements and a practical timeline to allow implementation. Ultimately, SB 806 will help ensure better lives for Maryland's animals, farmers, and increase access to products that align with Marylander's values.

For these reasons, the ASPCA respectfully urges this committee to vote in support of SB 806 and we thank the committee for their consideration today.

Sincerely,

*Nancy Perry*

Nancy Perry  
Senior Vice President of Government Relations  
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)

# **Avian Flu Factsheet Maryland.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kate Brindle

Position: FAV

### **Background of avian flu:**

Avian influenza is a viral infection that primarily affects bird species, including chickens and turkeys. Avian flu is highly contagious among birds. The virus can spread through direct contact with infected birds, as well as through contaminated environments, including water, feed, equipment, and clothing. Wild birds, especially migratory ones, often serve as reservoirs for the virus, facilitating its spread over large geographic areas.

### **40 million egg-laying hens have been killed because of avian flu:**

Since the onset of the current outbreak in early 2022, more than 130 million birds have been killed across the United States, including roughly 40 million egg-laying hens. (source: [Reuters](#); [NBC, Lansing MI](#)).

### **The egg industry is experiencing unprecedented shortages because of avian flu:**

Since millions of egg-laying hens have been killed, significantly fewer birds are producing eggs for consumption. According to Brian Moscogiuri, Vice President of Eggs Unlimited (one of the world's largest suppliers of eggs), "Eggs right now are just going through an unprecedented supply shock due to the avian influenza virus." (source: [NBC Connecticut](#)) The American Egg Board noted that "At the same time the volume of eggs sold at retail has been up year-over-year for 21 consecutive months." (source: [American Egg Board](#)) So, demand, coupled with shortened supply, has caused prices to spike. Bernt Nelson, an economist at the American Farm Bureau Federation said, "Bird flu infections are by far the biggest factor impacting egg prices." (source: [CBS News](#))

### **Avian flu is driving egg prices, which is a national trend:**

The substantial loss of egg-laying hens has led to a marked decrease in egg production nationwide, causing egg prices to surge. Egg producers and agriculture industry experts agree on the culprit of rising prices: avian flu. (source: [VailDaily.com](#)) Bernt Nelson, an economist at the American Farm Bureau Federation said, "Bird flu infections are by far the biggest factor impacting egg prices." (source: [CBS News](#))

### **Cage-free legislation isn't the cause for higher egg prices; the real culprit is avian flu**

Several states have cage-free legislation similar to SB 806/HB 834, such as Colorado and Michigan. Those states' poultry industry and experts agree that it's avian flu driving egg prices, not cage-free legislation. Kate Greenberg, Colorado's commissioner of Agriculture, noted, "You may have seen egg shelves bare or purchase limits or prices very high right now with eggs. That is high path avian influenza having an impact on the marketplace, that is not the cage-free egg law. These just happened to coincide at the same time." (source: [VailDaily.com](#)) Bill Scebbi, executive director of the Colorado Egg Producers, echoed these sentiments when he said: "Cage-free legislation has nothing to do with the shortage of eggs. Nada. They can't find eggs because there's a shortage of hens throughout the United States due to avian influenza." (source: [9news.com](#))

Nancy Barr, executive director for the Michigan Allied Poultry Industries, noted that cage-free legislation won't significantly impact prices. She said, "Will the egg prices go up because of our cage-free law? I don't think so. We already have enough cage-free supply for the state of Michigan." (source: [Detroit News](#)) Barr has also said, "Michigan's egg farmers have been working diligently for many years to reach full cage-free egg production to meet both changing customer needs and the pending state law in Michigan." (source: [The Blade](#))

**Cage-free facilities do not lead to more outbreaks of avian flu:**

It's been noted that avian flu is often passed from wild birds interacting with domesticated chickens (source: [PBS News](#)). However, Maryland's cage-free bill does *not* mandate outdoor access for egg-laying hens. The overwhelming majority of commercial cage-free hens live their entire lives indoors, meaning they wouldn't interact with wild birds, nor catch avian flu from them. **Moreover, according to the USDA, in 2025 thus far, 71% of avian flu outbreaks were in cage systems, whereas only 29% of outbreaks occurred in cage-free systems (source: [USDA](#))**

**Maryland's cage-free egg bill has a farmer-friendly phase-in date**

Since SB 806/HB 834 contains a multi-year phase-in period, it is highly unlikely that the country will still be experiencing an avian flu outbreak.

# **Center for Food Safety statement on the use of cag**

Uploaded by: Kate Brindle

Position: FAV



### **Center for Food Safety statement on the use of cages in egg production**

The Center for Food Safety supports legislation and corporate initiatives to end the confinement of egg-laying hens in cages. Decades of research have clearly shown that cage confinement increases the risk of *Salmonella* contamination compared to cage-free production. Cooking is not a guarantee to kill *Salmonella* since it can survive a variety of cooking methods. The fact remains that in terms of potential *Salmonella* contamination, eggs from caged hens are simply more dangerous than their cage-free counterparts.

Cage-free requirements are an important way for lawmakers and companies to protect the health of consumers from the significant public health threat of cage eggs. Since there is a strong connection between cages and pathogen contamination, adopting laws and corporate policies to end the caging of egg-laying hens results in safer food for families.

**WASHINGTON D.C. OFFICE:** 518 C Street, NE, Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20002, T (202) 547-9359, F (202) 547-9429

**CALIFORNIA OFFICE:** 303 Sacramento St, 2nd floor, San Francisco, CA 94111, T (415) 826-2770, F (415) 826-0507

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST OFFICE:** 2009 NE Alberta St, Suite 207, Portland, OR 97211, T (971) 271-7372

# **Factsheet 2025 Maryland Cage-Free Egg Bill.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kate Brindle

Position: FAV



**Humane  
World for  
Animals**

Formerly called the Humane  
Society of the United States and  
Humane Society International

# Support SB 806/HB 834, the cage-free egg bill



## Marylanders deserve safer, affordable, more humane eggs

Due to enormous public opposition to confining farm animals in ultra-restrictive cages, it's now clear that the future of egg production is cage-free. SB 806/HB 834, sponsored by Sen. Benjamin Kramer and Del. Jen Terrasa, would ensure that, after a phase-in period, eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free operations that adhere to the egg industry's own guidelines. This bill will promote food safety, advance animal welfare and provide a business-friendly regulatory scheme.

## Increases animal welfare and lowers food safety risks

Millions of hens in the egg industry in the U.S. are still confined in barren cages so small they can't even flap their wings. These conditions are not only cruel for the birds, but cage systems have been associated with higher rates of salmonella, a disease that can be deadly—especially in young children and the elderly. Evidence indicates that cage-free systems reduce salmonella risks.

## Focuses solely on eggs and keeps costs down

**This measure does not impact any other sector of animal agriculture, such as Perdue or any other broiler (meat) chicken producer.** Production cost differential between cage and cage-free housing systems is minimal. Since cage-free eggs will become the baseline standard, retail markup will actually *decline* as grocery stores market the cage-free eggs as their "value" egg. Retailers will use these low-priced, cage-free eggs to draw foot traffic, just as they do today with cage eggs.

## Modest, industry-written standards

The guidelines written in SB 806/HB 834 for cage-free systems merely require 1 square foot per bird. The bill simply implements the United Egg Producers' own cage-free standards.

## Demand for change: Commercial egg-buyers

This measure codifies where the market is already going. For example: Costco, McDonald's, Burger King, Popeye's, Denny's, IHOP, Applebee's, Arby's, Olive Garden, Panera Bread, Taco Bell, Shake Shack, Starbucks, Outback Steakhouse, The Cheesecake Factory, Nestle, General Mills, Kraft Heinz, Unilever, Mondelez, Conagra Brands and many other companies already use (or are on track to use) 100% cage-free eggs in the U.S. Almost all of these companies are going to get to cage-free before or by the deadline in SB 806/HB 834.

## The majority of Maryland voters support cage-free legislation

A Hart Research survey found that a strong majority (two-thirds) of Marylanders want the state legislature to pass cage-free legislation. Even after hearing claims against the bill, support for cage-free legislation remains unchanged among Maryland voters.



# **Humane World for Animals SB 806 Written Testimony.**

Uploaded by: Kate Brindle

Position: FAV



Formerly called the Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society International

1255 23<sup>rd</sup> St. NW, Suite 450  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-452-1100

humaneworld.org

February 25, 2025

Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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#### RE: Strong support for SB 806

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the committee: Humane World for Animals (formerly known as the Humane Society of the United States), on behalf of our thousands of supporters across Maryland, thank Senator Kramer for introducing SB 806. Eggs in Maryland should be safer, more affordable and more humanely produced. SB 806 will make safer foods more affordable for Maryland residents, and we wholeheartedly support the passage of this measure.

On many egg factory farms, hens are crammed into cages so small the birds can't fully spread their wings. Each bird is given less space than the dimensions of an iPad on which to live her entire life. She's forced to eat, sleep, and defecate in the same space and is denied almost everything that is natural to her. These conditions are cruel to the animals and increase the spread of diseases, like Salmonella, which can then sicken people. Extensive research shows that locking hens in cages increases the risk of Salmonella contamination, a bacteria that can be lethal, especially in children and the elderly.

SB 806 codifies where the market is already going. More than 200 of the country's largest food companies have committed to switching to a 100 percent cage-free egg supply. This includes Burger King, Unilever, General Mills, Aramark and Costco, along with Maryland-based Sodexo and Marriott.

Cage-free legislation is popular with Maryland voters. According to a recent survey conducted by Hart Research, a strong majority (two-thirds) of Marylanders want the state legislature to pass a cage-free law like SB 806. Even after hearing opponents' claims, support for cage-free legislation remains unchanged amongst Maryland voters.

Another survey, which was conducted by YouGov, of 600 Maryland voters reveals widespread confusion about egg carton labels and the nightmarish conditions that hens are often subjected to. When presented with three different egg cartons sourced from farms that employ a caged housing system, only 23% of Maryland voters correctly believed that the eggs were sourced from cage-confined hens. The confusion is driven by the use phrases on egg cartons, such as "farm fresh" and "all natural," which sound nice, but are meaningless. The results prove the need for cage-free legislation so consumers can know what they're actually purchasing. Moreover, after being presented with photos depicting an average caged housing facility, 83% of those surveyed said they support a policy requiring that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments. Further, when informed that such a policy would modestly increase egg prices, 82% of those surveyed still supported cage-free legislation in the state.



Currently, retailers often charge a premium for a dozen cage-free eggs. Because of this artificial premium, lower income Maryland residents have a harder time purchasing cage-free eggs. Since cage-free eggs will become the new standard under SB 806, that artificial premium will go away. Retailers will market cage-free as their “value” egg to draw customer foot traffic, just like they do today with eggs from caged hens. So, SB 806 will give more access to safer food for Maryland families. A new [USDA report](#) confirms that when states adopt cage-free policies, premiums on cage-free eggs go down.

[Egg industry data](#) and consumer data shows that egg prices in California—which has a nearly identical law prohibiting the sale of eggs from hens in cages—changed by less than a penny per egg once the law was implemented. In addition, the hidden costs of such inhumane confinement are increased cruelty and food safety risks. It’s animals and consumers who are currently paying those hidden prices.

SB 806 is in line with laws enacted in other states. Over the past several years, red, blue and purple states have passed similar measures, like California, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Arizona. Utah and Rhode Island have also passed cage-free egg standards. These measures all garnered strong bipartisan support.

In addition to aligning with other states, SB 806 is farmer-friendly by providing market and regulatory certainty. The bill contains the egg industry’s own cage-free standards. The United Egg Producers’ commonsense guidelines on cage-free systems allow hens to perform important natural behaviors like extending their wings, walking, perching, dustbathing and laying eggs in nest boxes. SB 806 is based on these guidelines. It also contains an exemption for small and family farmers with flocks fewer than 5,000 birds. Additionally, the bill only applies to egg-laying hens, not broiler chickens (i.e., birds who are used for their meat). So, it wouldn’t impact Perdue or any other broiler meat producer.

We also understand the United States is experiencing a devastating, nationwide outbreak of avian flu. Avian flu is often passed from wild birds interacting with domesticated chickens (source: [PBS News](#)). However, Maryland’s cage-free bill does *not* mandate outdoor access for egg-laying hens. The overwhelming majority of commercial cage-free hens live their entire lives indoors, meaning they wouldn’t interact with wild birds, nor catch avian flu from them. **Moreover, according to the USDA, in 2025 thus far, 71% of avian flu outbreaks were in cage systems, whereas only 29% of outbreaks occurred in cage-free systems (source: [USDA](#))**

Since SB 806 contains a multi-year phase-in period, it is highly unlikely that the country will still be experiencing an avian flu outbreak. So, the time to act is now. Maryland has consistently been a leader in protecting animals from abuse and in promoting ethical business practices, and SB 806 fits perfectly with that tradition.

For the foregoing reasons, we kindly urge you to vote yes on SB 806.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Brindle". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kate Brindle  
Program Manager, Public and Corporate Policy, Farm Animal Protection  
Humane World for Animals

# **YouGov Toplines Maryland Cage-Free Poll 2024.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kate Brindle

Position: FAV

Sample            Online sample of 600 voters fielded from November 21 to November 27, 2024.  
 Margin of Error    ±5.8%



1. [Corresponds to Egg Carton Image 1] For each of the following egg carton labels, please tell us which best describes the living conditions of chickens that produced them.

These eggs come from chickens in barns with access to the outdoors .....	26%
These eggs come from chickens in barns with room to move but no outdoor access .....	13%
These eggs come from chickens confined to small cages with little space to move .....	21%
Not sure .....	40%
Totals .....	100%
<b>N</b> .....	<b>600</b>



2. [Corresponds to Egg Carton Image 2] For each of the following egg carton labels, please tell us which best describes the living conditions of chickens that produced them.

These eggs come from chickens in barns with access to the outdoors .....	19%
These eggs come from chickens in barns with room to move but no outdoor access .....	15%
These eggs come from chickens confined to small cages with little space to move .....	25%
Not sure .....	41%
Totals .....	100%
<b>N</b> .....	<b>600</b>



3. [Corresponds to Egg Carton Image 3] For each of the following egg carton labels, please tell us which best describes the living conditions of chickens that produced them.

These eggs come from chickens in barns with access to the outdoors .....	18%
These eggs come from chickens in barns with room to move but no outdoor access .....	18%
These eggs come from chickens confined to small cages with little space to move .....	23%
Not sure .....	41%
Totals .....	100%
<b>N .....</b>	<b>600</b>

4. Some eggs in grocery stores come from chickens confined in cages. These chickens spend their entire lives in small cages. Other eggs come from chickens housed in open barns where they can walk and stretch their wings. Would you rather chickens be caged or housed in open barns with no cages?

Kept in cages .....	7%
Housed in open barns with no cages .....	83%
Not sure .....	10%
Totals .....	100%
<b>N .....</b>	<b>600</b>

5. For each of the following types of eggs, please tell us whether you think the chickens are confined in cages or housed in open barns with no cages. Choose one for each row.

	These eggs come from chickens in barns with access to the outdoors	These eggs come from chickens in barns with room to move but no outdoor access	These eggs come from chickens confined to small cages with little space to move	Not sure
“Grade A”	25%	12%	23%	40%
“Brown eggs”	24%	15%	15%	46%
“Free Range”	68%	17%	4%	10%
“Pasture”	59%	17%	7%	17%
“Organic”	37%	15%	16%	33%
“Natural”	43%	12%	13%	32%
“All-Natural”	41%	14%	12%	33%
“Vegetarian Fed”	24%	19%	19%	39%
“Farm Fresh”	30%	20%	17%	33%

6. Would you be surprised to learn that eggs labeled with phrases like “Farm Fresh” and “All Natural” can come from chickens confined in cages?

Yes, I would be surprised .....	44%
No, I would not be surprised .....	56%
Totals .....	100%
<b>N .....</b>	<b>600</b>



7. [Accompanies Chicken Image 1] Below is an image of chickens in a cage used in egg production. Lawmakers are considering legislation to require that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments. Do you [support or oppose] a law requiring that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments?

Strongly support .....	50%
Somewhat support .....	25%
Somewhat oppose .....	7%
Strongly oppose .....	8%
Don't know .....	10%
Totals .....	100%
<b>N .....</b>	<b>600</b>

8. Below is an image of chickens in a cage used in egg production. Lawmakers are considering legislation to require that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments. Do you lean towards [supporting or opposing] a law requiring that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments?

Lean towards supporting .....	77%
Lean towards opposing .....	23%
Totals .....	100%
<b>N .....</b>	<b>59</b>

9. Below is an image of chickens in a cage used in egg production. Lawmakers are considering legislation to require that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments. Do you [support or oppose] a law requiring that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments? (Including leaners)

Strongly support	50%
Somewhat support	25%
Lean towards supporting	8%
Lean towards opposing	2%
Somewhat oppose	7%
Strongly oppose	8%
Totals	100%
<b>N</b>	<b>600</b>

10. Below is an image of chickens in a cage used in egg production. Lawmakers are considering legislation to require that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments. Industry experts estimate that this requirement would increase egg prices by a few pennies an egg. Do you [support or oppose] a law requiring that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments?

Strongly support	48%
Somewhat support	30%
Somewhat oppose	9%
Strongly oppose	8%
Don't know	5%
Totals	100%
<b>N</b>	<b>600</b>

11. Below is an image of chickens in a cage used in egg production. Lawmakers are considering legislation to require that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments. Industry experts estimate that this requirement would increase egg prices by a few pennies an egg. Do you lean towards [supporting or opposing] a law requiring that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments?

Lean towards supporting	82%
Lean towards opposing	18%
Totals	100%
<b>N</b>	<b>31</b>

12. Below is an image of chickens in a cage used in egg production. Lawmakers are considering legislation to require that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments. Industry experts estimate that this requirement would increase egg prices by a few pennies an egg. Do you [support or oppose] a law requiring that eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free environments? (Including leaners)

Strongly support	48%
Somewhat support	30%
Lean towards supporting	4%

Lean towards opposing .....	1%
Somewhat oppose .....	9%
Strongly oppose .....	8%
Totals .....	100%
<b>N</b> .....	<b>600</b>

This survey is based on 600 interviews conducted by YouGov on the internet of registered voters who are registered in the state of Maryland. The sample was weighted according to gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and U.S. Census region based on voter registration lists, the U.S. Census American Community Survey, and the U.S. Census Current Population Survey, as well as 2020 Presidential vote. Respondents were selected from YouGov to be representative of registered voters. The weights range from 0.02 to 6.22 with a mean of 1 and a standard deviation of 1.05.

The margin of error (a 95% confidence interval) for a sample percentage  $p$  based upon the subsetting sample is approximately 5.8%. It is calculated using the formula:

$$\hat{p} \pm 100 \times \sqrt{\frac{1 + CV^2}{n}}$$

where  $CV$  is the coefficient of variation of the sample weights and  $n$  is the sample size used to compute the proportion. This is a measure of sampling error (the average of all estimates obtained using the same sample selection and weighting procedures repeatedly). The sample estimate should differ from its expected value by less than margin of error in 95 percent of all samples. It does not reflect non-sampling errors, including potential selection bias in panel participation or in response to a particular survey. Some items withheld for future release.

# **Testimony in Support of SB806H - Ken Ayres (1) (1)**

Uploaded by: Ken Ayres

Position: FAV

Members of the Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

My name is Ken Ayres, and I am a resident of Rockville, Maryland. I strongly support SB806/HB0834, which would ban the sale of eggs from battery-caged hens. This bill is an important step forward for Maryland's food safety and public health.

Many of us are currently witnessing an increase in egg prices due to bird flu. **It's important to know that this has nothing to do with the cage-free production environment; bird flu does not discriminate by the type of housing or the size of the farm. The disease is carried by wild birds.** Outbreaks have occurred in both caged and cage-free facilities, as well as in poultry farms of all sizes. Preventing bird flu is about strong biosecurity measures, not keeping hens in cages.

Cage-free systems do **help reduce the risk of other dangerous infections, such as Salmonella.** Research has shown that eggs from battery cage systems are more likely to be contaminated with Salmonella due to the crowded, unsanitary conditions in which the hens are kept. When hens are crammed together with little room to move, bacteria spread more easily, increasing the risk of contamination. Cage-free systems allow for better airflow, cleaner environments, and healthier birds, which ultimately leads to safer eggs for consumers.

This bill is about keeping Maryland's food system modern and safe. I ask you to vote in favor of SB806/HB0834 to ensure that our state remains a leader in responsible food production.

Best,

Ken Ayres, 105 Dale Dr, Rockville, MD 20850

# Heartwood Farm.pdf

Uploaded by: Kim Alexander

Position: FAV

## Testimony in Support of SB 806 – Cage-Free Egg Legislation

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the committee,

My name is Kim Alexander, and I am proud to represent Heartwood Farm, located in Friendsville. At Heartwood, we believe in the humane treatment of animals, and our practices reflect that belief every single day.

Our hens are more than a part of our farm—they are part of a thriving, natural ecosystem where their well-being is prioritized. They are free to move, stretch their wings, and engage in the natural behaviors that are critical to their health and happiness. These freedoms are fundamental to their quality of life and to the high-quality eggs they produce.

When hens are confined to cages, they are denied the ability to move freely or express these natural behaviors. Instead, they are subjected to a life of stress, immobility, and suffering. Such conditions are not just inhumane but also at odds with Maryland's reputation as a state that values progress and compassion.

SB 806 is a vital step in ensuring that all egg-laying hens in Maryland are afforded a basic standard of care—one that allows them to live with the ability to roam, forage, and stretch. This bill aligns with both consumer demand for responsibly sourced products and the growing national momentum toward cage-free practices.

Happier hens mean healthier animals and better products, and it also means peace of mind for farmers and consumers alike. By passing SB 806, you have the opportunity to bring these benefits to farms and families across the state.

We urge you to support this critical legislation. Maryland's leadership on this issue will set an example for others to follow, proving that humane farming practices are not only possible but essential.

Thank you for considering this important measure.

Sincerely,  
Kim Alexander  
Heartwood Farm  
Friendsville, MD

# **Olmo Bros Farm.pdf**

Uploaded by: Larry Olmo

Position: FAV

Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 25, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the committee:

I am Larry A. Olmo and my wife and I cofounded Olmo Bros Farm, a family owned and operated farm in Annapolis. Our operation has been running for more than 15 years. Our philosophy is to grow our products in a carefully planned and sustainable manner without the use of environmental impacting pesticides and herbicides. It is for these reasons that we support SB0806 and ask that the Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote in favor of it.

Thank you for considering this legislation.

Larry A. Olmo  
1704 Old Generals Hwy  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
larry@olmobros.com

# **Butterbee Farm.pdf**

Uploaded by: Laura Beth Resnick

Position: FAV

MD Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 25, 2025

Members of the MD Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

My husband and farming partner, Jascha Owens, and I have owned and operated Butterbee Farm for over a decade in Baltimore. We are big proponents of Maryland agriculture and support SB806. This legislation would provide economic opportunities for Maryland farmers, improve animal welfare, and help guard public safety. I ask the committee to vote favorably on SB806.

Sincerely,

Laura Beth Resnick  
butterbeefarm@gmail.com

**2025 TESTIMONY re SB0806.pdf**

Uploaded by: Laura Van Etten

Position: FAV

Laura Van Etten  
Monocacy Mills  
19735 Mouth of Monocacy Road  
Dickerson, Maryland 20842  
LVEAmazon@aol.com

TESTIMONY TO MARYLAND SENATE  
EDUCATION, ENERGY and the ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

RE: SB0806 Regarding Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens

Hearing Date 02/27/2025

I am a Maryland resident and local farmer who for the last 12 years have had a sheep and wool farm in Dickerson, Maryland. I strongly support SB0806 and ask the Members of this Committee to support this legislation. Thank you, Sen. Kramer, for sponsoring this bill. My support for this bill is based upon both national health matters and economic issues.

Avian Flu and the Overcrowding of Chickens

The outbreak of Avian Flu among large-scale chicken and egg producing operations is directly related to the crowded conditions under which these birds are kept.

- A 2015 research study entitled Interaction of the role of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) in Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDS) by James E Hollenbeck summarized: the “Most significant change in the evolution of the influenza virus is the rapid growth of the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) on a global scale.” Vol 38, Infection, Genetics and Evolution. [10.1016/j.meegid.2015.12.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.meegid.2015.12.002)
- In Feb. 2006, a multiple author study entitled Confined Animal Feeding Operations as Amplifiers of Influenza concluded: “Influenza pandemics occur when a novel influenza strain, often of animal origin, becomes transmissible between humans. Domestic animal species such as poultry or swine in confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) could serve as local amplifiers for such a new strain of influenza.” <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17187567/>
- And most recently, in Veterinary Medicine News, Brandon Bieltz wrote on March 15, 2024: What is avian influenza and what does it mean for you, farmers and backyard flocks? Veterinarians and researchers at the NC State College of Veterinary Medicine are working to better understand highly pathogenic avian influenza and help the poultry industry manage its risks. How quickly can an avian influenza spread through a flock? It’s usually three to four days from catching the influenza to dying. It’s very quick. But in those three or four days, they are shedding. So, they may not be showing signs, but because they are drinking the same water as the other ones, they are passing the virus. And you hear about the “pecking order.” They will peck on a sick bird, and then they will pick up the virus. **In a commercial flock, where they are close together, it will spread like wildfire.** In three or four days, most of them are affected. If you have a small flock, it may take a week or two to get affected. It is “when,” not “if” other birds will have it. (highlight mine) <https://news.cvm.ncsu.edu/what-is-avian-influenza-and-what-does-it-mean-for-you-farmers-and-backyard-flocks/>

For this reason alone, large scale mass crowding of chickens should be phased out. Similarly, Salmonella is much less likely in non-caged flocks.

Rural Economic Opportunity

I live in the Ag Reserve of Montgomery County where many local farmers raise chickens and sell eggs. The requiring of cage-free operations would increase the ability of these farms and many additional farms to prosper by selling sustainably produced eggs. This policy change would clearly enhance the ability of small farms to compete with national brands that have few or no environmental or health related limits on crowding.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

# **Grazy Days Family Farm.pdf**

Uploaded by: Leah Mack

Position: FAV

February 25, 2025

Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
Annapolis, MD

**Testimony of Grazy Days Family Farm in Support of SB 806**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the committee:

I am writing on behalf of Grazy Days Family Farm, a mother-and-daughter regenerative eco-farm in Frederick County, Maryland. As farmers dedicated to ethical and sustainable animal husbandry, we strongly support SB 806, which ensures that egg-laying hens have the ability to move freely and express natural behaviors.

At Grazy Days Family Farm, we raise pasture-raised eggs and 100% grass-fed lamb using regenerative practices that prioritize both animal welfare and environmental sustainability. We have witnessed firsthand the profound difference that proper animal movement makes—not only in the health and well-being of the animals but also in the quality of the food they produce.

Hens that are allowed to roam are visibly healthier, stronger, and happier since they get to engage in their natural behaviors. Conversely, restricting movement of birds creates stress, weakens immune systems, and leads to unnecessary suffering. We have seen the difference, and we know that allowing animals to move is the right thing to do.

By passing SB 806, Maryland has the opportunity to affirm that humane, responsible farming practices are not only possible but necessary. We urge you to support this bill and stand with farmers who prioritize the welfare of their animals and the sustainability of our agricultural systems.

Thank you,

Leah Mack  
Grazy Days Family Farm  
Frederick County, Maryland

# **Lindsey Van Wagner SB Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lindsey Van Wagner

Position: FAV

## Testimony in Support of SB806

Members of the Maryland Legislature,

My name is Lindsey Van Wagner, and I live in Rockville, Maryland. I am writing in strong support of SB806, which would ban the sale of eggs from battery-caged hens. As someone who raises backyard chickens, I see every day how important it is for hens to have space to move, forage, and express their natural behaviors. Keeping them crammed in tiny cages is not only cruel but completely unnecessary.

Chickens are intelligent, social animals. My hens love to scratch in the dirt, stretch their wings, take dust baths, and perch up high. These are not luxuries—they are basic needs. When I see my chickens enjoying their space, I can't imagine subjecting them to the extreme confinement that battery cages impose. In fact, my hens were all stuck under cover yesterday before I shoveled the snow and once I created more space for them, they were so happy to walk around! They are very lucky animals but unfortunately they are in the minority. It is heartbreaking to think that millions of hens are forced to live their entire lives in a space smaller than a sheet of paper, unable to even spread their wings.

Beyond the ethical concerns, healthier, less-stressed hens lay better-quality eggs. I've experienced firsthand how much healthier and stronger the eggs from my free-roaming chickens are compared to those from caged systems. [Research backs this up](#), showing that cage-free eggs often have lower risks of contamination. If Maryland passes this bill, consumers will benefit from safer, higher-quality eggs, and egg producers will be encouraged to move toward more humane practices.

I urge you to pass SB806 and ensure that Maryland no longer allows the sale of eggs from battery-caged hens. No animal should have to endure such extreme suffering, especially when better alternatives are available and already working in other states.

Thank you,



Lindsey Van Wagner

14512 Faraday Drive

Rockville, MD 20853

**edited bill new .pdf**

Uploaded by: Lisa Campion

Position: FAV

Bill: SB0806

Committee: Environment, Energy, and the Environment

Position: Support

Members of the Environment, Energy, and the Environment:

Our names are Lisa Campion and William Bastian, and we are Maryland residents who strongly support SB806/HB0834, which would ban the sale of eggs from battery-caged hens. As consumers who care about food safety, public health, and ethical food production, we believe this bill is a necessary step forward for our state.

One of the most pressing concerns with battery cage egg production is the increased risk of foodborne illness. Research has consistently shown that eggs from battery-caged hens have a higher risk of salmonella contamination compared to eggs from cage-free systems. Given that eggs are a staple in many households, schools, and restaurants, it is critical that we prioritize food safety and reduce the potential for outbreaks that could harm Maryland families.

In addition to health risks, the vast majority of consumers today prefer to purchase products that align with their values. Many grocery stores and restaurant chains have already committed to going cage-free because they recognize that customers want more humane options. By passing SB806/HB0834, Maryland would ensure that all consumers—regardless of where they shop or dine—have access to eggs that meet higher animal welfare and food safety standards.

Finally, Maryland has an opportunity to align with the growing national movement toward cage-free production. States like California, Washington, Massachusetts, and Oregon have already enacted similar laws, and the largest egg producers are already adapting to meet this new standard. Maryland should not lag behind on this important issue.

For these reasons, we urge you to support SB806/HB0834. It is a commonsense measure that will improve food safety, meet consumer demand, and ensure Maryland moves toward a more responsible and sustainable food system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Campion and William Bastian

725 George Ave

Essex, MD 21221

# **Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Co**

Uploaded by: Lisa Radov

Position: FAV



## MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411  
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

February 27, 2025

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.  
Re: Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production – Prohibitions -SB 806 - 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 - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production – Prohibitions - SB 806.

Most hens in the egg industry are crammed into wire cages so small they can't even spread their wings. Packed five or more to a cage, each hen is forced to spend her whole life in a meager amount of space that is smaller than the dimensions of an iPad. Virtually unable to move, the hens are prohibited from engaging in almost any of their natural behaviors, like perching, nesting, and dustbathing.

HB 834 contains the United Egg Producers' own cage-free standards. These standards allow the birds to perform important natural behaviors like flapping their wings, walking, bathing and laying eggs in nest boxes. Requiring all eggs produced and sold in Maryland to meet the industry's own cage-free standards would improve quality of life for over five million egg-laying hens every year. Moreover, the majority of US current egg production relies on battery cages, a known source of disease for chickens and humans.

Many states have already passed legislation or regulations banning battery cages for egg-laying hens, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Colorado, Utah, Michigan, Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, and Nevada.

We are mindful of the effects of Avian Flu affecting the supply and prices of eggs at this time. This legislation would not go into effect until January 1, 2030, giving farm owners who are affected by this legislation and the industry time to adapt.

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Kramer for his sponsorship of SB 806 and ask the committee for a favorable report.

# **SB806 Testimony for Feb 27 2025.pdf**

Uploaded by: Michele Waldman

Position: FAV

**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.

**SB.docx (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Michelle Kleinhans

Position: FAV

**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



# **2025 Maryland Senate Cage-Free Egg Bill Testimony**

Uploaded by: Miranda Eisen

Position: FAV



VIA [MGALEG.MARYLAND.GOV](http://MGALEG.MARYLAND.GOV)

Bill: Senate Bill 806  
Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Position: Favor  
Date: February 25, 2025

### **Support for SB 806: Maryland's Cage-Free Egg Legislation**

Farm Sanctuary, on behalf of our Maryland members, strongly supports Senate Bill 806, which will prohibit the production and sale of eggs under conditions where hens are subjected to extreme battery cage confinement.

Hens exploited by the egg industry are confined in cages so tightly that they cannot engage in their most basic natural behaviors like perching, nesting, walking, or spreading their wings. In addition to inflicting immense suffering on hens, these inhumane and stressful environments are a breeding ground for disease and pose health risks to humans. Alongside animal welfare and environmental organizations, consumer protection organizations like the Center for Science in the Public Interest and Center for Food Safety also support cage-free reforms.

SB 806 presents a timely opportunity to prevent needless suffering and protect Maryland communities. In addition to family farmers, corporations like McDonald's recognize the need for reforms and have successfully transitioned away from battery cage egg production. Over 200 other companies, including Maryland-based Marriott and Sodexo, have committed to a 100% cage-free egg supply because it's an affordable and feasible way to do better by consumers and farm animals.

Farmers, corporate suppliers, and animal advocates all agree that it is time to end the cruel confinement of birds in battery cages. We urge members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to vote YES on SB 806.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Gene Baur, Co-Founder & President of Farm Sanctuary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Baur", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**SB806 HB0834 Testimony\_MK.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Molly Kogan

Position: FAV

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 do 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.

# **Ambling Brook .pdf**

Uploaded by: Polly Matzinger

Position: FAV

Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

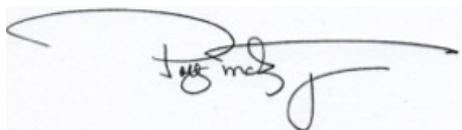
February 25, 2025

Dear Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I write to you today as a Maryland farmer who owns and operates Ambling Brook farm in Fredrick. We have operated since 2011 and raise lambs and pasture-raised hens. We believe in the value of ethically produced food and like to say that our lambs grow up on grass, sunshine, rain, and mother's love. Our hens are about as free-range as chickens can get - some of them sleep in my weeping willow trees rather than in the coop! I understand that not all chickens can enjoy this kind of freedom, as they need protection from predators and disease, however, to be caged for all of their lives is a cruel affront to their natures and to the sensibilities of those who care for them.

We are proud of our products and believe they are of higher quality because of our commitment to ethical production practices. Our hens produce eggs with amazingly beautiful dark orange yolks - even in winter!

As a Maryland farmer, I support SB0806 and ask the committee to do the same. Thank you for your consideration.



Dr. Polly Matzinger  
4810 Elmer Derr Rd  
Frederick, MD 21703  
amblingbrookfarm@gmail.com



A variety of winter yolks, each hen having found slightly different forage.

# **Written Testimony on SB806\_ Agriculture - Confinem**

Uploaded by: Robert Szabo

Position: FAV

## **Written Testimony on SB806: Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions**

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

From: Robert Szabo

Date: February 25, 2025

Subject: Vote YES on SB806

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and respected Committee Members,

My name is Robert Szabo, I am a Maryland resident living in District 18, in Montgomery County. I am submitting this testimony to express my support for SB806, which seeks to prohibit the Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production.

This legislation will ban the use of cages to confine egg-laying hens in commercial egg operations. The modern practice of caging hens started after World War II when farmers looked for ways to make their operations more efficient and profitable, as part of a broader movement toward industrialization of agriculture in the second half of the 20th century. Large-scale operations found that by confining hens into the smallest space possible, they could maximize their output of eggs. These efficiencies, however, came at the direct cost of animals' welfare.

Today, the average layer chicken has 67 square inches of cage space, according to Humane World for Animals, which is less than a standard sheet of paper. Not only are these hens not able to engage in normal behaviors like running, digging in the dirt, or socializing with the flock, but many cannot even stand up or stretch their wings in these conditions. Confinement leads to psychological and physical traumas including foot disorders, overgrown claws, and bone disease. Layer chickens are already calcium-deficient from constant egg production and at risk for osteoporosis, and this risk is greatly increased when they are caged with no opportunity to exercise. I would encourage members of the committee to look for images and video evidence of the treatment of chickens in Maryland egg operations if they do not yet see the harms of the system.

Mandating cage-free operations is a small but necessary step to address the animal welfare problems in our food industry. Eleven states have already passed legislation

banning confinement of egg-laying chickens, and dozens of major US restaurants and retailers have already committed to only sourcing cage-free. Given how harmful caging is to chickens, I was shocked to learn that Maryland has not acted on this issue. We should be a part of this new policy direction, and encourage our Maryland farmers to follow the market change as more consumers insist on humane treatment of farm animals. For these reasons, I would strongly encourage the committee to vote in favor of SB806.

Sincerely,

Robert Szabo,

5341 Randolph Rd. Apt. 4,

Rockville, MD 20852

**Shields Testimony MD Cage-free Egg Bill SB 806.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sara Shields

Position: FAV



Formerly called the Humane  
Society of the United States and  
Humane Society International

1255 23<sup>rd</sup> St. NW, Suite 450  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-452-1100  
humaneworld.org

Thursday, February 27, 2025

Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Submitted by: Dr. Sara Shields, Director of Farm Animal Welfare Science, Humane World for Animals

**RE: Testimony in strong support of SB 806: Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 806, a bill that is important for consumers and for animals.

I am an ethologist, a specialist in animal behavior and I completed my doctoral work at the University of California at Davis. I am the Director of Farm Animal Welfare Science for Humane World for Animals, and I work with farmers, corporations, governments, financial institutions, and veterinarians around the world to improve the welfare of farm animals. I respectfully request your support for SB 806, a bill that would require modest protections for egg-laying hens.

The confinement of animals in intensive agricultural production systems is an important issue. Consumers and food companies are increasingly concerned about how food is produced and how animals are treated on farms. It is well documented in scientific literature that certain aspects of intensive animal production are detrimental to the welfare of farm animals. This is particularly true for egg-laying hens confined to wire “battery cages,” which are so small the birds cannot even spread their wings. These systems prevent the expression of important natural behavior and have real physical consequences on the health and well-being of the animals. For example, the lack of normal movement and exercise is a prime cause of skeletal weakness in hens,<sup>1,2,3</sup> birds already prone to osteoporosis due to genetic selection for egg production, which requires significant calcium metabolism. Hens in cages are unable to roost at preferred heights, dustbathe, forage or express other forms of highly motivated natural behavior, each with a particular biological function. Comfort behavior, such as stretching, wing-flapping, and preening, are also reduced or prevented in battery-cages.<sup>4,5,6</sup> Feathers are important for body temperature regulation and protecting the underlying skin, but in cages, abrasion of the feathers against the wire can damage the hen’s plumage.<sup>7</sup> A cage is simply not an acceptable housing environment for a hen.

Battery cages were widely introduced after World War II, at a time when we knew much less about the behavioral needs of animals. Confinement systems were promoted as part of a trend toward the mechanization and automation of agriculture. There was little understanding of the depth of animals’ ability to experience suffering. Since then, the concept of animal welfare has evolved and become much more widely recognized, parallel to the published scientific research in animal behavior and cognition. **This research has confirmed that**

**hens are intelligent, active, inquisitive, social animals with complex needs beyond simply feed, water, and shelter.**

**This new science has been applied to improve animal housing designs in a way that complements the biology of the hens, rather than suppressing their natural behavior.** Modern cage-free systems include features such as nesting boxes, perches, and loose litter and are widely and successfully used around the world. In the United States alone, cage-free egg production has grown from a modest 4% of the total egg market in 2009 to 40% in 2024. Given the recent advances in legislation, and corporate commitments to purchase only cage-free eggs, this percentage is expected to continue to grow. There is now a large body of advice and guidelines from universities, genetics companies, animal welfare certifiers and equipment manufacturers to assist egg producers in managing cage-free systems well. A 2021 meta-analysis of 6,040 commercial flocks with 176 million hens in 16 different countries found that mortality in cage-free systems is as low as it is in cages.<sup>8</sup> With advanced management practices, cage-free hens are healthy and productive.

Like any other business, farms must keep pace with new research, market shifts, and changing social norms. Requiring cage-free production systems ensures that new investments are future proof. Consumers care about where their food comes from, and they expect animals to be well treated on farms. **Cage-free production is the industry best practice and battery cages are outdated and inhumane.**

Please enact SB 806 and bring Maryland's egg production in line with the science, and with modern expectations regarding how farm animals should be housed.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Sara Shields, PhD.  
Director, Farm Animal Welfare Science  
Humane World for Animals

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<sup>1</sup> Shipov A, Sharir A, Zelzer E, Milgram J, Monsonogo-Ornan E, and Shahrar R. 2010. The influence of severe prolonged exercise restriction on the mechanical and structural properties of bone in an avian model. *The Veterinary Journal* 183:153–60.

<sup>2</sup> Knowles TG and Broom DG. 1990. Limb bone strength and movement in laying hens from different housing systems. *Veterinary Record* 126:354-6.

<sup>3</sup> Norgaard-Nielsen G. 1990. Bone strength of laying hens kept in an alternative system compared with hens in cages and on deep-litter. *British Poultry Science* 31(1):81-9.

<sup>4</sup> Nicol CJ. 1987. Effect of cage height and area on the behaviour of hens housed in battery cages. *British Poultry Science* 28:327-35.

<sup>5</sup> Hughes BO and Black AJ. 1974. The effect of environmental factors on activity, selected behaviour patterns and "fear" of fowls in cages and pens. *British Poultry Science* 15:375-80.

<sup>6</sup> Appleby MC, Mench JA, and Hughes BO. 2004. *Poultry Behaviour and Welfare* (Wallingford, U.K.: CABI Publishing).

<sup>7</sup> European Food Safety Authority. 2023. Welfare of laying hens on farm. *EFSA Journal* 21(2):7789.

<sup>8</sup> Schuck-Paim C, Negro-Calduch E, and Alonso WJ. 2021. Laying hen mortality in different indoor housing systems: a meta-analysis of data from commercial farms in 16 countries. *Scientific Reports* 11: 3052.

# **Third Way Farm.pdf**

Uploaded by: Thomas Shireman

Position: FAV

## Testimony in Favor of SB 806

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the committee:

We ask that the committee please support SB 806.

As background about us, we run Third Way Farm, which is located in Havre de Grace, Maryland. Our farm spans 67 acres and has been dedicated to the principles of permaculture, sustainability, and regeneration since we broke ground in 2015.

We believe in being good stewards of the land rather than dominating it. Our commitment to sustainable farming practices is evident in our no-till farming methods, which promote the highest level of soil management for our produce, protein, and fiber production. We also employ companion planting, composting, and rotational grazing methods to ensure the health and vitality of our farm ecosystem.

SB 806 is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Animal Welfare:** SB 806 will phase out the use of barren wire cages for egg-laying hens, allowing them to engage in natural behaviors. Allowing hens to be raised out of cages is essential for their well-being.
2. **Food Safety:** The current confinement practices increase the spread of diseases like salmonella, which can sicken people. By transitioning to cage-free systems, we can reduce the risk of such diseases and ensure safer food for Maryland families.
3. **Consumer Demand:** This bill will help Maryland farmers meet the growing demand for more humane products, while providing regulatory certainty.

At our farm, we are consistently learning and improving our practices, hoping that our efforts empower others to join us in our mission to cultivate faith, community, and justice for all. We believe that SB 806 is a step towards achieving these goals and creating a more sustainable and humane food system in Maryland.

For these reasons, we kindly ask the committee to support SB 806.

Thank you,

Tommy and Michelle Shireman  
Third Way Farm

**SB0806\_Confinement\_of\_Hens\_MLC\_FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FWA



## **TESTIMONY FOR SB0806 AGRICULTURE - CONFINEMENT OF EGG-LAYING HENS IN COMMERCIAL EGG PRODUCTION - PROHIBITIONS**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Kramer

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0806 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The Eastern Shore is home to some of the most extensive chicken farming operations in the nation. Air quality issues and asthma rates are soaring from the toxic chemicals that have permeated the air around these large chicken operations. The chickens also suffer. Caged chickens are usually kept battery cages their entire productive life; they can barely stand up, cannot spread their wings, and are denied natural behaviors like roosting, nesting, perching and bathing. They are fed antibiotics to control the spread of disease.

This legislation, if enacted, would require a cage-free housing system for chickens starting in 2030. The system would require more than one square foot of usable space for each chicken and allow them access to the outdoors. It would also require the chicken farmer to obtain a certificate from the Maryland Department of Agriculture that states that they are providing a cage-free environment for their chickens in order to sell the chicken eggs. Without the certificate, they will not be able to sell the eggs. If they are found to have violated these requirements, they would be subject to a civil fine that escalates from \$500 for a first violation to \$2,000 for each violation after the third violation.

Given the bird flu and all of the other issues surrounding the confinement of chickens, we believe this is not only necessary, but it needs to be done immediately. We recommend that the cage-free housing is available by the end of the year. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report in committee.

# **SB 806- Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens - Prohibiti**

Uploaded by: Grayson Middleton

Position: UNF



*Educate. Advocate. Innovate.*

Date: February 25, 2025  
To: Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment  
From: Grayson Middleton, Government Affairs Manager  
Re: SB0806 – Prohibiting Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens – **Oppose**

Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA) the 1,600-member trade association representing the meat-chicken growers, processing companies, and allied business members on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and Delaware opposes SB 806 and urges an unfavorable committee report.

SB 806 would prohibit the widespread and standard industry use of battery cages in egg-laying operations.

To be clear, the Delmarva Chicken Association represents the broiler (meat) chicken industry alone and does not normally advocate on behalf of other poultry or egg-layers. However, we do represent allied business members who supply and serve egg-laying operations as well as the broiler industry. In addition, as an agricultural association, we advocate for policies that are beneficial to Maryland agriculture as a whole and oppose those that would be detrimental.

Except for purposes of transportation, our chickens have never been, and will never be in cages. However, this is what logistically works best for our industry. As you will hear from others, their needs are different from ours. However, as an agricultural association, we take exception to any policies that are not economically sound nor based on scientifically proven research. Some estimates show that implementing these rules could raise production costs by 40% and would require a 119% increase in labor.<sup>1</sup> Legislation that harms a farmer's well-being and runs contrary to fine-tuned, widespread, and generally accepted agricultural practices sets a dangerous precedent for the entire agricultural economy and community.

This legislation is also detrimental to both the livestock and the consumer. Analyses have shown that implementing this law could cause as much as a 35% reduction in egg supply, and a 22% increase in the retail price of eggs.<sup>2</sup> This is compounded by the persistently inflated price of eggs in the United States. Furthermore, studies from the European Union (where cage-free is now mandated) have demonstrated significantly higher rates of infectious diseases among poultry.<sup>3</sup> This is particularly concerning for our industry, as High Path Avian Influenza remains the most significant threat to our economic well-being and animal welfare.

Again, while we do not use cages in the broiler industry, we think it is very concerning when legislation is considered which gives more credence to objective beliefs about what is best for the animal than it does sound science and economic viability.

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<sup>1</sup> [Economic and market issues on the sustainability of egg production in the United States: Analysis of alternative production systems - ScienceDirect](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Understanding the Pores of a Soilless Substrate \(purdue.edu\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Infectious diseases in free-range compared to conventional poultry production - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)



*Educate. Advocate. Innovate.*

For these reasons, we urge an **unfavorable** vote on SB 806.

Should you have any additional questions, please contact me at [middleton@dcachicken.com](mailto:middleton@dcachicken.com) or 410-490-3329.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Grayson S. Middleton".

Grayson Middleton  
Government Affairs Manager

# 25 MGPA SB806 Cage free eggs.pdf

Uploaded by: Lindsay Thompson

Position: UNF



Maryland Grain Producers Association  
118 Dundee Ave, Chester, MD 21619  
Lindsay.mdag@gmail.com (p) 443-262-8491  
www.marylandgrain.com

Date: February 27, 2025

Senate Bill 806 - Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production – Prohibitions

Committee: EEE

MGPA Position: OPPOSE

The Maryland Grain Producers Association (MGPA) serves as the voice of grain farmers growing corn, wheat, barley and sorghum across the state. MGPA opposes Senate 806 which would prohibit the production of non-cage free eggs in Maryland for farms with more than 5,000 birds after January 1, 2030.

MGPA supports the responsible and humane care of egg-laying hens which is currently being done in both caged and cage-free systems in Maryland. Currently, egg-laying hens in Maryland consume nearly 3 million bushels of corn directly from Maryland farmers every year. This is 4% of Maryland total corn production and a value of nearly \$14M to Maryland farmers.

While some of these farms have already begun the transition to cage-free houses and plan to continue, it is a long and expensive transition. The prohibition of non-cage-free housing systems at the beginning of 2030 is not a realistic or feasible timeline for some of the family farms operating in this space. Additionally, the threat of avian influenza wiping out these farms makes it difficult to justify a huge capital investment for the family farms.

MGPA believes the market is moving in this direction in a manner and at a speed that is logistically and financially feasible without legislation.

We urge your unfavorable report on Senate Bill 806.

**SB806\_MRA\_UNF.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sarah Price

Position: UNF

# MARYLAND RETAILERS ALLIANCE

*The Voice of Retailing in Maryland*



**SB806 Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions**  
**Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment**  
**February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Position:** Unfavorable

**Background:** SB806 would require that all egg production in Maryland utilize cage-free facilities and would prohibit the sale of eggs that are not cage-free.

**Comments:** The Maryland Retailers Alliance has concerns about the impact of SB806 on farms, retailers, and consumers in Maryland. The bill would prohibit the sale of traditionally farmed eggs in Maryland and imposes the prohibition based on the assumption that a retailer “knows or should have known” the manner in which all eggs sold by their business were produced. While businesses would not be held liable for violation if their actions were based on a good faith belief in the egg producer’s certified compliance with the law, the expectation that retailers should therefore obtain proof of certification from every producer is burdensome. Existing State law already requires egg sellers to obtain a special permit; proof of compliance should be part of the process of obtaining the selling permit for farms producing eggs. A State-maintained list of permitted farms should then be available to retailers as a resource for approved egg sellers, and it should not be the responsibility of the retailer to prove that each source of eggs is compliant with the law.

The prohibition on the sale of eggs produced in confinement could also negatively impact the availability and cost of eggs in Maryland. The legislature does not have the authority to require non-Maryland farms to utilize exclusively cage-free practices, and it is unclear from the bill whether facilities in other states would be able to obtain a certification for only the cage-free portion of their operations, should they engage in a combination of traditional and other cage-free or free-range facilities. If this is impossible or if the process is too burdensome, SB806 could ostensibly restrict all retailers to only selling egg products produced in Maryland. We do not know at this time if producers in the state are capable of meeting the demand this would cause, particularly given recent actions taken by farms in response to the spread of the H5N1 virus. Retailers and consumers in Maryland and across the country are already facing historically high prices for eggs due to the virus. Passage of SB806 may exacerbate this issue and further drive up prices.

For these reasons, we would respectfully urge an unfavorable vote on the bill. Thank you for your consideration.

# **MDFB - Opposition - SB806 Agriculture - Confinemen**

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: UNF



## Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035  
410-922-3426 | [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com)

February 25, 2025

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

**From:** Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**Re:** **Oppose SB806 Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions**

On behalf of our nearly 8,000 Farm Bureau families in Maryland, I submit this written testimony in opposition to SB806. This bill bans the use of cages in egg-laying farms in Maryland starting January 1, 2030.

The economic impact to an existing farm to make these changes is a 41% increase in cost of production to retrofit the existing barns and an 119% increase in labor. By moving to a cage-free operation, the hen mortality rate increases significantly due to more bacterial habitat being introduced in the barn. Also, these farms are contracted with out-of-state companies that will just drop their contracts in Maryland and then these farms will have to create a new demand for their eggs in a market where there is already an oversupply of cage-free eggs. This bill would put the egg-laying farms, that farm this way, out of business or at a competitive disadvantage.

State regulations, retailer pledges, and consumer demand have contributed to a rising share of egg-laying hens housed in cage-free systems over the past decade. Nonetheless, conversion from conventional to cage-free housing is costly for both egg producers and consumers. As such, there remains uncertainty about the extent to which egg producers will be willing and/or able to continue the transition to cage-free housing at a rate commensurate with retailers' cage-free pledges. Shell egg producers understand the importance of retailer demand driving the evolution of the market to cage-free. However, several barriers still remain, such as; higher costs and labor requirements, challenges obtaining financing to convert or build new facilities, and skepticism that retailer pledges can be met without significant financial incentives.

**MDFB Policy:** We strongly oppose any ban of the use of cages in layer operations.

**Maryland Farm Bureau Respectfully Opposes SB806**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Hough", with a horizontal line above it.

Tyler Hough  
Director of Government Relations

*Please reach out to Tyler Hough, [though@marylandfb.org](mailto:though@marylandfb.org), with any questions*

**SB806\_MDVMA\_INFO.pdf**

Uploaded by: Danielle Bauer Farace

Position: INFO



## Maryland Veterinary Medical Association (MDVMA)

Established in 1886, MDVMA is a volunteer, non-profit organization comprised primarily of licensed Maryland Veterinarians.

### **SBo806 - Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions**

**Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment**

**February 25, 2025**

#### **MDVMA Position: Information**

Animal welfare, conservation of resources and protection of the health of the public are the pillars of veterinary medicine. As the largest organization of veterinarians in Maryland, the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association wishes to make clear, there is no scientific body of evidence to suggest that cage-free eggs are more nutritious, safer, carry less foodborne pathogen risk, or are necessarily more humane.

Neither the Food and Drug Administration nor the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service have identified any increased risk of foodborne illness from caged eggs. What is likely most critical regarding bacterial contamination of shelled eggs is exactly where the egg is deposited. Salmonella and E. coli are omnipresent in environments that house laying hens and if the egg is deposited on an unclean floor or outdoor environment or on a soiled conveyor belt, bacterial contamination can result in significant risk factors to the consuming public. It is important to note that the conveyor belt is likely to be a component of both a modern caged system and a cage-free system. Additionally, when chickens lay eggs in predictable locations (like conveyor belts available in both caged and free-range systems), there is an opportunity to focus extensively on keeping this surface free of organic debris. The recovery rate of critical bacterial taxons from egg conveyor belts tends to be lower than from any other areas of the housing system (caged or free range).

Regardless of how a hen is housed, eggs and egg products are inspected by the USDA and FDA for safety and appropriate labeling. Additionally, the Egg Safety Final Rule applies to both caged and cage-free eggs to ensure adequate protection of the public from foodborne illness.

From a welfare perspective it is evident a hen housed outside of a cage has a more natural life. That does carry benefits to the individual welfare of that animal. This is the only meritorious reason for such mandates. Producers aren't caging these animals to be inherently cruel. Hens display behavioral characteristics that can, and many times do lead to welfare issues of their own including: cannibalism and other mutilation type behaviors and cages can prevent the manifestation of these undesirable behavioral characteristics. Additionally, parasites that infect birds are present in significantly higher numbers when birds are in contact with floors and dirt. Additionally, birds are significantly more likely to fall ill and die from these diseases when housed in more natural environments. When birds are unable to produce well in their environments it is not only a welfare issue to the bird but, also an inherent risk to the public who depend on adequate egg and meat production to maintain food supplies. Enriched caged environments, specifically prohibited by this proposal could present an opportunity to enhance the quality of life for the chicken while minimizing exposure to the aforementioned risk factors.

Finally, High Path Avian Influenza is a disease of significant risk to not only our poultry but our regional economy and global food security. Increased interface between production poultry and migratory birds and waterfowl increases the likelihood of these outbreaks which we have seen a resurgence of in recent years. It is true that screens can reduce predation of free range birds effectively, but, they are limited in their ability to prevent the transfer of highly virulent and pathogenic strains of airborne viral diseases.

The MDVMA wishes to highlight there are inherent advantages to both free range and caged production systems for the health of the bird and the public. The choice of which type of egg to purchase is, and should remain for Maryland consumers to decide. We believe it is critical to food security/public health that Maryland producers have the ability to produce eggs with flexible systems that reduce externalities posed by adverse disease or weather events when necessary while maintaining welfare of the individual chicken.

MARYLAND VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

PO Box 387 | Cordova, MD 21625 | Ph: (410) 305-7083 | [danielle@MDVMA.org](mailto:danielle@MDVMA.org) | [MDVMA.org](http://MDVMA.org)