



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 18, 2025

Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee  
250 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: Veterinary Support for HB 834: Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce 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 approximately 60 Maryland veterinarians--with a focus on the health and welfare of all animals, including those raised for food. We want to convey our strong support for HB 834, legislation that would phase out the cruel cage-confinement of egg-laying hens.

It is common sense that 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 a phase-out of the most intensive and inhumane production practices, including battery cages for egg-laying hens, to reduce the “risks to public health and improve animal well-being.”<sup>ii</sup> More recent studies support the significant animal welfare benefits of cage-free systems.<sup>iii</sup>

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.



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)

We respectfully encourage the House Environment and Transportation Committee to support HB 834 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. HB 834 will ensure a more humane, safer, and sustainable food system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink 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

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid, p. 85

<sup>iii</sup> See, e.g., [Effects of Housing Systems on Production Performance, Egg Quality, Tonic Immobility and Feather Score in Laying Hens - PMC](#), Vet Med Sci. . 2024 Nov 4;10(6):e70112. doi: [10.1002/vms3.70112](https://doi.org/10.1002/vms3.70112)