

## **PLEASE SUPPORT: HB0834 (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,

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