



Date: Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Time and Location: 1:00 pm in the House Environment and Transportation Committee

To: Del. Marc A. Korman, Chair
Del. Regina T. Boyce, Vice-Chair
Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

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

RE: Support of HB 834: Agriculture – Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production - Prohibitions

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, 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 and as a resident of Maryland, I want to voice our strong support for HB 834. The ASPCA is invested in protecting animals, farmers, and consumers in Maryland and has provided more than \$1.4 million directly to Maryland organizations that work to protect animals in the last decade. As important as those grants are, it is essential to solidify these protections by enacting positive policies like HB 834. This bill would improve the welfare of millions of laying hens, align Maryland with the broader trend of transitioning to higher-welfare farming systems and ensure that Maryland farmers 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 been responding 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. Additionally, the ongoing avian influenza outbreak illustrates the urgent need to move away from confinement systems, which have increased rates of disease spread and virulence compared to higher-welfare systems.

HB 834 is a common-sense bill, offering clear space and enrichment requirements and a practical timeline to allow implementation. Ultimately, HB 834 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 HB 834 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)