

February 17, 2025

To: Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee Members.

Re: Testimony in Support of HB834: Agriculture – Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production – Prohibitions

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) and our Maryland supporters, we write in strong support of HB834. CIWF is a global non-profit that promotes higher standards of animal welfare in animal agriculture. This bill is welcomed and necessary to improve the welfare of egg-laying hens, enhance food safety, and support Maryland's agricultural economy.

HB834 will:

- Improve Animal Welfare – Cage-free housing allows hens to express natural behaviors such as foraging, dustbathing, and perching, reducing stress and injury.
- Support Industry Trends – The egg industry is rapidly transitioning to cage-free systems in response to consumer demand, retailer commitments, and legislative actions in other states.
- Enhance Public Health – Cage-free systems reduce the risk of foodborne illness and zoonotic diseases, as healthier hens contribute to safer food supply chains.
- Boost Maryland's Economy – This bill will create market opportunities for local farmers, helping them stay competitive and keeping revenue within the state.

Major food retailers and producers, including Target, Costco, McDonald's, and Whole Foods, are already committed to cage-free egg sourcing. Many states, including California, Colorado, and Massachusetts, have passed similar laws, proving that a transition to cage-free production is feasible, beneficial, and the future for egg production in the US.

Maryland has the opportunity to be a leader in ethical and sustainable agriculture. We urge you to support HB834 and ensure a better future for animals, farmers, and consumers. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Matthew Dominguez
US Executive Director
Compassion in World Farming