



## MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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February 19, 2025

To: The House Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.

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

Chair Korman, Vice - Chair Boyce, members of the Environment and Transportation 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 House Environment & Transportation Committee vote favorably for Agriculture - Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens in Commercial Egg Production – Prohibitions- HB 834.

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.

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 Delegate Terrasa for her sponsorship of HB 834 and ask the committee for a favorable report.