

Dear Senator:

The undersigned organizations ask for your support of S. 3239, the Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments of 2012. This important legislation is the result of collaboration between the egg industry and animal welfare groups, and will improve the welfare of egg-laying hens while protecting jobs and keeping costs low for consumers. The bill is endorsed by the nation's egg farmers, animal advocates, veterinarians, consumers, and the leading scientists in the egg industry.

S. 3239 provides for a multi-year transition to enriched colony cages, in which each laying hen will ultimately be provided nearly twice as much space as the current industry standard, along with enrichments such as nest boxes and perches that permit hens to better express natural behaviors. Cage-free, free-range and similar systems, as well as operations with fewer than 3,000 laying hens, will be unaffected by the legislation.

In the absence of a national standard, interstate commerce in eggs will be increasingly threatened by state statutes – several already on the books, others likely to follow through ballot initiatives – that seek to regulate not only production practices within the state, but the trade in eggs produced in other states. Since the standards already enacted are not consistent with each other, and future standards are likely to be similarly varied, the implications for producer costs, consumer prices, steady availability of egg supplies, and the future of family-owned egg farms are severe.

By contrast, a national production standard will not only create a single production guideline that is fair to all producers, but will also enhance the welfare of laying hens in every state – not just those that have enacted their own standards. This is an opportunity for Congress to ratify an agreement that has the support of all the major stakeholders, and is good for the egg industry, good for jobs, good for animal welfare, good for consumers, and good for science. We urge you to support and cosponsor S. 3239 and urge its swift passage by the Senate.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

United Egg Producers
The Humane Society of the United States
American Veterinary Medical Association
Association of Avian Veterinarians
American Association of Avian Pathologists
Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
National Federation of Humane Societies
Consumer Federation of America
National Consumers League
Compassion in World Farming

World Society for the Protection of Animals
Humane League
Compassion Over Killing
Mercy for Animals
Farm Sanctuary
In Defense of Animals
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Center for Food Safety
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Humane Society Legislative Fund

State & Regional Egg Farmer & Agricultural Groups

Arkansas Egg Council
Association of California Egg Farmers
Colorado Egg Producers Association
Florida Poultry Federation
Georgia Egg Association
Michigan Allied Poultry Industries
New England Brown Egg Council
North Carolina Egg Association
Ohio Egg Processors Association
Michigan Agri-Business Association
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

State & Local Humane Societies

Animal Welfare Society (Maine)
Oregon Humane Society
Animal Humane Society (Minnesota)
Humane Society of Charlotte (North Carolina)
Humane Society of Berks County (Pennsylvania)
SPCA Cincinnati (Ohio)
Richmond SPCA (Virginia)
SPCA for Monterey County (California)
SPCA of Texas
Sacramento SPCA (California)
Washington Humane Society

Academic Officials

Dr. Jeffrey Armstrong, President, California Polytechnic State University