

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Representative Joseph J. Solomon, Jr, Chair
Representative William W. O'Brien, First Vice Chair
Representative Justine A. Caldwell, Second Vice Chair
And Members of the House Corporations Committee

Re: Opposition to H 7946

Dear Chair Solomon, First Vice Chair O'Brien, Second Vice Chair Caldwell,
and Members of the Committee,

Confining hens in battery cages is one of the cruelest practices in animal agribusiness. Typically, each bird has less space than a single letter-sized sheet of paper on which to live her entire life. Unable to fully spread their wings, these birds are highly restricted in their ability to walk or engage in other natural behaviors. The denial of being able to nest, perch and dust-bathe causes tremendous suffering for the hens.

This is why Rhode Island advocates like myself spent years advocating for cage-free legislation, which the Rhode Island legislature eventually passed in 2018. The eight-year timeline for cage-free conversion contained in the law was farmer-friendly and especially accommodating to the sole egg producer in the state utilizing battery cages on a large scale. Other states with considerably more egg production than Rhode Island have passed similar laws, granting egg producers far less time to convert.

Affected egg producers in Rhode Island have had six years since our law was enacted to convert to cage-free production. They still have two years to comply with the 2026 deadline. Failure to comply and attempting to undermine the original law should not be encouraged. There is no reasonable argument to delay any further. I kindly urge you to vote no on H 7946.

Sincerely,

Christa Albrecht-Vegas
259 Sprague Street
Portsmouth, RI 02871