

Dear Senator,

You should know that Rhode Islanders may soon be confronted with the same painful realities of Californians regarding the price of eggs while not improving food safety nor the welfare of the chickens. The Rhode Island House just passed HB5505 which bans the production of eggs in caged environments. The rationale in HB5505 is for the additional space afforded chickens so they can spread their wings without touching anything. California enacted a similar law (Proposition 2) that went into effect January 1, 2015. Recently, a California television station interviewed me for an explanation as to why the price of California eggs had gone up so much. In California in January egg were \$2.75 to \$3.30 per dozen. Stores in San Francisco were selling a dozen eggs for \$5.99. This compared with the nation's average price between \$0.82 to \$1.04 per dozen. I explained the California law increased the space per chicken to 116 square inches. The costs to produce eggs at that new requirement reduced the available supplies of eggs to the point where they were double and triple the cost elsewhere. The television anchors asked "why didn't anyone warn us this would happen." We did, but they were not listening. The same will happen in Rhode Island.

Added to this looming impact on consumers, the chickens in California had more injuries and broken bones from the new dimensions because whenever they became frightened they flew into the tops of the enclosures or into the perches or nest boxes injuring themselves. The chickens pecked each other more (they naturally establish a pecking order) because the numbers of birds in each enclosure had increased over the typical 6 birds in conventional cages. The nest boxes also became contaminated with manure so that the eggs laid there became contaminated with pathogenic bacteria. The end result was higher priced eggs without the intended benefits of welfare or food safety. That is where Rhode Island is headed.

The National Association of Egg Farmers urges you to vote "no" on banning cages in Rhode Island for the sake of the chicken, for the sake of the consumer from a food safety perspective coupled with the increased price, and for the sake of government ensuring its decisions are based on sound science instead of the misinformed emotions from activist groups.

Ken Klippen, President

National Association of Egg Farmers

www.eggfarmers.org