



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, Inc.

775 Bloomfield Avenue • Windsor, CT 06095-2322
(860) 298-4400 • Fax (860) 298-4408 • www.cfba.org

Testimony in regards to:

RE: HB 5811 AN ACT CONCERNING BATTERY CAGES AND EGG LAYING HENS.

Submitted by: Don Tuller, President, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of 5,000 families dedicated to farmers and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Connecticut Farm Bureau opposes HB 5811 AN ACT CONCERNING BATTERY CAGES AND EGG LAYING HENS.

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Don Tuller from Tulmeadow Farm in West Simsbury. I am President of Connecticut Farm Bureau and my purpose today is to speak on behalf of our thousands of Farmer Members. I urge the defeat of Proposed Bill 5811. Passage of this bill would not just destroy the Connecticut poultry industry, but also weaken the infrastructure that the rest of Connecticut Farmers depend upon as well.

In this situation, facts need to win out over feelings. If people don't like the idea of lower cost eggs that have been produced by chickens in battery cages, then they should buy the more expensive free range or organic eggs. You should not make everyone, including our poorest citizens, pay more for the high quality, low cost protein source that cage laid eggs provide. If you ban any particular livestock production practice, that industry will move or fold, and consumers will pay more for, in this case, eggs that are brought in from farther away.

We used to raise chickens on our farm for egg production. We stopped in the late 1970's. The chickens were on range until they started laying, and then they were in groups of 220 layers per room. While they were outside they became prey to foxes and wandering dogs during the day, that if they got inside the fence, would kill as many as they could, for sport, until we shot them or ran them off. At night when they were locked in their coops, other predators would tunnel under the coop and pull them down through the wire on the floor. Once they were brought inside, the weaker ones were picked at by the stronger ones, and if we didn't isolate them, they were bloodied, and killed. When chickens are kept in smaller groups (cages), this "pecking order" is less pronounced. Chickens lay more eggs in cages than under other systems. If it really bothered them, they would be stressed and lay fewer eggs. Do you remember the concern about Bird Flu?

The greatest concern about its transmission was from migratory birds to the poultry flocks that were living outside in Connecticut. Cage producers have an excellent record of bio-security and disease control.

Please keep in mind that chickens are chickens, and do not seem to need to be raised like people. By defeating Proposed Bill 5811, you have the opportunity to keep an important industry in Connecticut, and avoid raising the cost of food for the residents of our state that can least afford it.

Please oppose RB 5811, AN ACT CONCERNING BATTERY CAGES AND EGG LAYING HENS.