



**OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN
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To: The Joint Committee on Environment

Re: Bill 5811 "An Act Concerning Battery Cages and Egg Laying Hens"

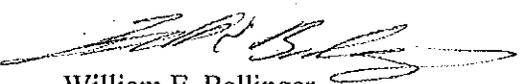
Committee Members:

I am William E. Ballinger, the 1st Selectman of Bozrah Connecticut. As you may be aware, Bozrah is the host town for one of the largest egg producers in the country (Kofkoff Egg Farms) and obviously the Town has a vested interest in any proposed legislation that may adversely affect this operation. While the merits of this legislation might be debatable, the unintended consequence of its passage is not. If this bill passes it WILL result in the loss of this industry to Connecticut.

The facility in Bozrah is the town's largest taxpayer and employs approximately 300 people. It is the last remaining commercial egg-laying operation in Connecticut. Based on a regional Economic Model Inc. (REMI) analysis undertaken by the Connecticut Department of Economic Development a couple of years ago, the loss of Kofkoff Egg Farms would produce a statewide economic impact exceeding \$161 million annually. Together with an estimated \$25.7 million impact on consumer prices (represented by an increase in wholesale egg prices), the total in-State economic impact for loss of the Farm would be \$186.7 million annually. Given our current economic crises, do we, as a state, really want to lose this industry?

From the rhetoric on at least one of the web sites supporting this bill, I have some concerns as to whether the promoters of this legislation are really interested in improving the conditions of the birds or are more interested, for whatever reason, in shutting down agribusiness in general. A direct quote from this site states that this legislation will "effectively prevent factory egg farms from doing business in the state". Regardless of your feelings on agribusiness, it is the engine that feeds most of our population and we must move cautiously when considering regulations that will put it out of business. Another unintended consequence of such a move might just be a lower standard of living and reduced availability of agricultural products to our citizens.

I, therefore, am urging the legislature to defeat bill 5811.



William E. Ballinger

1st Selectman

Bozrah