

Dear Chairman Meyer, Chairman Roy, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

I am writing with **CONTINGENT SUPPORT** for **HB11-6402** (AAC the Requisite Number of Poultry for Certain Approved Food Sources Under the Public Health Code), with the contingency being that the language include a **BAN ON BATTERY CAGES**.

Insofar that this will encourage local production, HB11-6402 is a good idea, but please consider the appropriateness of establishing safeguards to ensure that the problems associated with large scale farming operations do not take root in small farms--it is in this spirit that I suggest adding language that provides for a ban on battery cages.

Most people who buy from local farms are willing to pay a premium because they feel that the farms are more humane and the products (and process) is more healthful. Battery cages, commonly used in large scale egg farms, are not humane and raise serious public health concerns.

**In 2008, the Pew Charitable Trusts and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health issued a report that included recommendations to phase-out battery cages, citing reasons that include animal welfare issues, public health concerns, environmental issues, and impacts on rural communities. The Pew/Johns Hopkins report (see [www.ncifap.org](http://www.ncifap.org)) is valuable in that it puts pricetags on externalities that need to be part of the discussion on true costs. When these externalities are considered (like the \$4-5 billion spent on antibiotic-resistant diseases annually in the United States, a cost largely driven by the massive antibiotics used in the feed of intensive farming practices), the "premium" the consumer pays for local, humanely raised eggs can be seen as a bargain.**

With regards to animal welfare, **battery cages deny expression of virtually all natural instincts** of the bird, resulting in an entire lifetime of frustration: She cannot dust bathe, she cannot find a quiet place to lay her eggs, she cannot explore and play. (Note: Birds rescued from battery cages will return to these natural behaviors.) She lives her entire life confined to an area roughly the size of the 8.5"x11" paper you are now reading. The stress is relentless: overcrowding, a lifetime on wire floors, a profound lack of exercise (aggravating osteoporosis\*, a common ailment in battery-caged birds), and manipulation of lighting and food to force unnaturally high egg production -- in bodies that naturally need cyclical rest to rejuvenate. Because these stressful conditions would likely cause excessive fighting with her cagemates, her beak is brutally cut off (the beak is a sensitive, innervated part of a bird's body).

**Battery cages are profoundly cruel and violate our basic moral obligations.** Please read the Pew/Johns Hopkins Report ([www.ncifap.org](http://www.ncifap.org)), and add language to ban battery cages.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Maryanne "Annie" Hornish

B.S., UCONN College of Agriculture; M.B.A., Western New England College  
53 Whitman Drive, Granby, CT 06035 \* (860) 966-1819 (cell) \* [ncil.annie@cox.net](mailto:ncil.annie@cox.net)

\*A 2005 study reported that nearly 25% of caged hens suffered from fresh bone breaks during depopulation (i.e., removed from cages for slaughter), compared to slightly more than 10% of hens from barn and free-range housing systems who suffered bone breaks as they were caught during depopulation. If considering transportation, unloading, and shackling for slaughter, the proportion of birds with broken bones increases to ~30% for battery-caged birds, compared to ~14% of free-range hens who had broken bones after shackling for slaughter. Bone breaks are a product of both osteoporosis and cages that are not designed with any consideration for humane treatment during the removal process.