

TESTIMONY OF ALLISON BRINK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MICHIGAN ALLIED POULTRY INDUSTRIES
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
OCTOBER 30, 2019

Good morning Madame Chairman, members of the committee,

My name is Allison Brink, executive director of Michigan Allied Poultry Industries. We are a collaboration of family farms, all based in Michigan, many of whom have been raising turkeys, chickens and egg-laying hens for nearly 100 years. Our association celebrates 80 years during 2020.

I am speaking to you today on behalf of these family farmers, who have dedicated their lives, across generations, to create one of our state's most important agriculture products—Michigan raised eggs.

Michigan is an egg-export state. You can find Michigan eggs from coast to coast. Not only are our eggs immensely popular and delicious, but chicken eggs have been found to be among the most valuable and inexpensive sources of protein in our diets.

Michigan is not a cage-free state, and we have NO CAGE FREE LAW.
We currently have a spacing standard IN A CAGE.

I am here to express our strong support for Senate Bill 174, which is good-sense legislation that produces a first-ever cage-free standard and aligns the timing of Michigan's laws for animal housing with the commitments from a majority of our country's leading buyers of eggs.

For nearly 10 years, Michigan's family egg farmers have worked to take positive steps in the smart housing of egg-laying hens.

However, the past 10 years have also been fraught with changes to egg laying hen housing standards. There has been no guidance and no direction, for egg producers. Frankly, the past decade has been a mess.

The only guidance has been the market, and by that I mean the commitments of their buyers, which are some of the largest names in the industry—McDonalds, Costco, Wal-Mart, Aldi, Meijer, SpartanNash and many more.

All of these grocery stores and restaurants made commitments to buying from cage-free producers. These commitments were all negotiated by the Humane Society of the United States.

In anticipation for cage-free egg production, our farmers are already investing millions to build new, cage-free hen houses, and have made significant strides to complete the transition.

Michigan's egg farmers fully support the alignment between industry and advocacy to achieve animal welfare and cage-free housing standards that protect Michigan's egg-laying hens and their farmers.

Once again, aligning the compliance date in Michigan law through SB 174 will bring state of Michigan policy in-line with national standards and customer commitments.

This change will both fully protect egg-laying hens, and protect the family farms who are among the leading egg producers in the U.S.

We appreciate your consideration and support of this important measure, which will keep Michigan's egg farms growing and ensure a strong Michigan agriculture sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

**TESTIMONY OF BILL PATMOS
PRESIDENT, SUNRISE ACRES
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
OCTOBER 30, 2019**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee.

My name is Bill Patmos and I am an egg farmer at Sunrise Acres.

Sunrise is an egg farm located in Hudsonville, Michigan. My mom and dad started the farm with 100 hens in 1949.

My brother and I took over the day-to-day operations in the 1980's. While my parents continued to help until they both passed in 2010, with my brother retiring in 2015, responsibilities on the farm have landed with my wife, our two sons, our son-in law, and myself. It is my dream that our grandchildren could continue to have the privilege to produce food for future generations of Michiganders.

While I am here to represent my farm and other egg farmers in Michigan, I am here to also speak on behalf of the future generation of farmers.

I was taught by my parents to take care of and respect our birds as we were growing up. That's what I continue to teach my sons. We participate in the United Egg Producers, Animal Welfare Program, Certified Humane, and American Humane Certified farm.

What started with just 100 egg-laying hens has grown to include 2 million hens that supply Michigan families with cage-free, organic and other highly nutritious eggs, and we are committed to taking great care of them.

We are proud to employ more than 180 people, who follow specific protocols to safely manage our small part of this country's egg supply. Additionally, we proudly support our neighboring farms by buying their grain and other supplies and services. This is our "Michigan First!" economy at work. A radical change will disrupt the whole thing.

I am joined by every Michigan egg producer to strongly support Senate Bill 174.

I am 60 years old. I have spent my life as an egg farmer taking care of birds. I've poured time into nutritional studies, disease prevention and quality egg control. Between 2010-2014, we built new hen houses using what we were told was the "humane standard." It cost us millions of dollars. Then the requirements changed, AND HSUS negotiated a new date with our customers. Our investments were lost, because they keep changing the standards.

Raising hens that produce eggs during the past 10 years has been a confusing mess. Changing housing standards make it impossible to know the right kind of barns to build, because we don't know if they'll be legal next year!

More recently, my fellow farmers and I have begun building new cage-free barns. 8.5 million Michigan hens currently live in cage-free barns that represent 56 percent of the total egg-laying hen population. But new construction doesn't happen overnight due to the complexity of building cage-free barns.

We know it is important for egg farmers to produce cage-free eggs. But it is VITAL and IMPORTANT for the future of our farms to have a standard that aligns both activism and industry.

These aren't just "barns," they are complex systems that guarantee the health and welfare of our birds and the food we eat. We've seen what happened in California and other states that didn't have production and purchase aligned—it decimated it.

I urge you today to:

Pass SB 174, and we can avoid a repeat of California, and Michigan's \$655 million egg-growing sector will thrive.

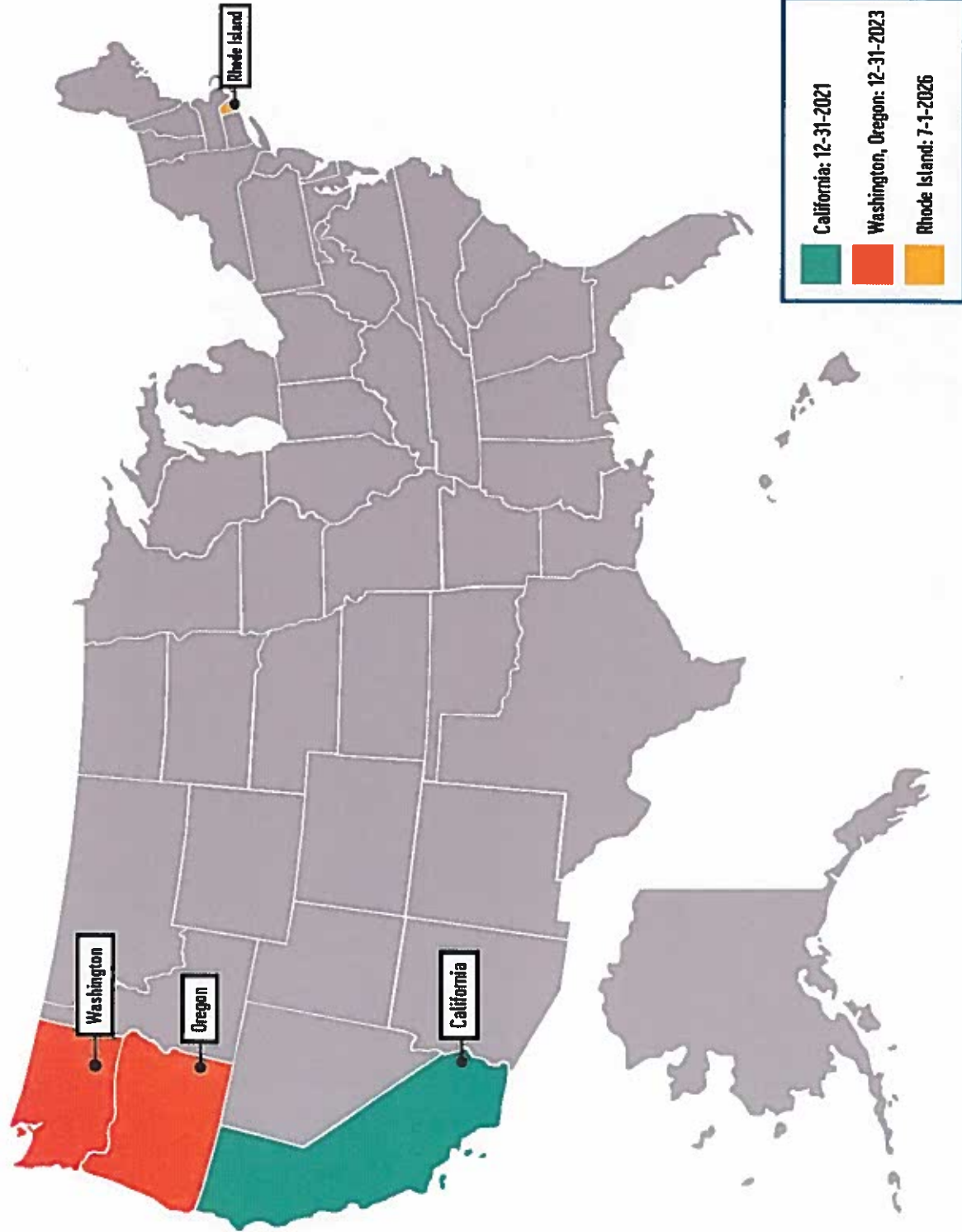
Pass SB 174, and you will ensure a prosperous Michigan agriculture economy that my grandchildren can work in, and teach their children to farm.

Pass SB 174, so you can ensure the health and safety of millions of Michigan hens, who will make the most delicious eggs that you've ever had on your plate.

We appreciate your consideration and support of this important measure, which will keep Michigan's egg farms growing and ensure a strong Michigan agriculture sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

States Requiring Cage-Free Housing





MICHIGAN ALLIED POULTRY INDUSTRIES

Michigan is a leading egg producer.

The process of raising eggs cage-free has not been a straight line.

The past 10 years have been confusing and disruptive.

Michigan Allied Poultry Industries egg farmers fully support the alignment between industry and advocacy to achieve cage-free legislation that continues to protect Michigan's egg-laying hens and their farmers.



CAGED

PRE-2009
Industry Standard

67 SQ. INCH

CAGED

2009

PA 117 Signed into law

144 SQ. INCH

CAGED

2010-2013

National Egg Bill at 116 sq. inch

INITIATIVE FAILED

116 SQ. INCH

CAGE FREE

ENRICHMENTS

- Dust Bathing
- Perches
- Nest Boxes
- Scratch Pads

2014-2015

HSUS negotiates with retailers at 144 sq. inch (Non-Binding)

144 SQ. INCH

CAGED

2020

PA 117 effective at 144 sq. inch

144 SQ. INCH

CAGE FREE

ENRICHMENTS

- Dust Bathing
- Perches
- Nest Boxes
- Scratch Pads

2025

Retailer commitments at 144 sq. inch

CAGE-FREE

* Not to scale

