



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Senator Dill, Representative Hickman, distinguished members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry committee, my name is Joshua Morris, I represent the people of the towns of Turner, Leeds, and Livermore. I am here today to testify against LD 2084 *An Act Prohibiting Certain Confinement of Egg Laying Hens and the Sale of Their Eggs*. This bill is bad for my community, it is bad for farmers, and it is bad for Maine families.

This bill is designed to target the Hillendale Egg farm that is in Turner, Maine. This farm employs over 100 local people and pays \$400,000 in property taxes, as well as \$30,000 in personal property taxes. Not to mention the excise taxes they pay on the vehicles that they register. In Leeds, they pay \$60,000 in taxes annually.

These jobs would be lost if this bill passes. The revenue would have to be made up by other residents or would result in cuts to services such as our volunteer fire departments in both towns, or our schools.

My family has lived in Turner for more than 200 years. My grandmother grew up on a dairy farm on Lower Street. The farms have been disappearing, especially the dairy farms. These farms rely on the chicken manure from the egg farm to fertilize their fields for feed for their cows. If they cannot get manure from the egg farm, they would be forced to purchase more expensive commercial fertilizers that will drive up the cost of doing business. This will drive up the cost of milk in the state or make it harder for dairy farms to remain open.

Which brings me to my last point, this bill is not good for Maine families. We hear much of food insecurity in Maine. Eggs from caged hens are cheaper to produce. You can buy them for as little as 99 cents a dozen. Cage free eggs can cost more than \$5. This bill will drive up the cost of eggs in Maine.

Eggs are a staple food. They are enjoyed for breakfast, and used in many baking recipes. It is not uncommon for a family of four to use two dozen eggs in a week. For Maine families on a budget, do we really want to double the cost of this food? For seniors on a fixed income, does it make sense to make them pay more at the grocery store?

Because of the devastation that this bill will cause to the communities affected, the farmers in Maine, as well as the impact it will have on the food security of Maine children and families, I strongly encourage this committee to vote this bill ought not to pass.