



*Hillandale Farms Conn, LLC.*

February 10, 2020

**LD 2084, An Act Prohibiting Certain Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens and the Sale of Their Eggs**

**Senator Dill, Representative Hickman, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry:**

**I regret that an overriding commitment prevents me from personally attending and speaking at the hearing on the above bill, which is of great importance to our firm and to our Turner farm operations.**

**Our firm is agreeable to the bill, provided it is amended as we understand the sponsor is asking the Committee to do. There should be no question as to Hillandale Farm's commitment to cage-free. All future expansion at any of our facilities will only be with chickens in a cage-free environment, As our existing facilities age, they will only be replaced with Cage Free Locations – Hillandale Farms currently has at Least 3 ongoing Projects into further Cage Free production –These project started in early 2016 and will continue for the Foreseeable future**

**And we are working just as hard as we can to meet that commitment as rapidly as possible. Our first obligation in the Northeast is to supply Massachusetts, which as per their 2016 ballot initiative must be selling only cage-free eggs by January 1, 2022—that's 2 less than two years from now. The project at our farm in Connecticut will be done as fast as our resources and construction permit—and there are definite limits.**

**We are by far the largest supplier of eggs to Maine's market – which at 1.3 million persons is very well suited for us. The compliance date in the bill before you, December 31, 2024, is more realistic than originally considered in our discussions with the Humane Society of the United States, and we look forward to supplying Maine, if a cage-free state as proposed, by that date.**

**However, we have also made it clear that there is absolutely no way that we can commit to serving Maine with cage-free eggs from the Turner farm by that date, or by any specific date thereafter. There are just too many variables in the commitments which will have to be in place to guarantee supplying Maine out of Turner. Along with our commitment to cage-free, our company has an unyielding commitment to honesty, and Integrity , a commitment to our employees as well as to the Health and well-being of our chickens**

**We appreciate Representative O'Neil's as well as Jeff Timberlake understanding of our situation, and share their desires, and that of all supporters of Maine agriculture, to see the Turner farm kept in operation.**

**Sincerely**

**Stephen Vendemia, President of Hillandale Farms Conn , LLC**