

House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources

01/27/2025 01:30 PM

HB25-1074 Change Confinement Standards Egg-Laying Hens

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Andrew Bourg Against themselves	<p>I am a hobbyist homesteader, I keep a flock of chickens at home, I have bees, we try to grow as much food as we can in our garden. After keeping chickens for the past several years, I committed to doing better with our purchases when we purchase meat of all types, and when we buy eggs. I just purchased eggs the other day (our ladies do not lay very much in the winter — completely natural and normal) and I paid the extra \$0.75 for eggs that are not just cage-free but free-range.</p> <p>I think it's important for us to continue to treat the world better and not exploit it for additional profit. I am firmly opposed to repealing the cage free egg requirements.</p>
Ingrid Moore Against themselves	<p>I oppose this bill on both humanitarian and on economic grounds.</p> <p>The bill posits that the price of eggs has increased because of the current space requirements for hens. The truth is that there have been multiple waves of Bird Flu since 2020 and that has had much more influence on egg prices than the meager space allotted to chickens. In fact, crowded living conditions are much more conducive to the spread of diseases and might make the impact of disease much greater. Also, some claim that increased space per bird produces better quality and more eggs.</p> <p>The current standard is 144 square in per hen. That is a 12" x 12" space!</p> <p>Allowing egg producers to voluntarily give these animals even less space is cruel and inhumane.</p> <p>I suspect that egg producers have already adjusted to the current requirements and are just trying to reduce costs at the expense of the health and well-being of these animals.</p> <p>Some of us only buy eggs from chickens who are free range and I won't buy any from companies who restrict their space to less than current requirements.</p>
Sheryl Fernandez For	<p>Hello Committee Members,</p>

<p>Broomfield Taxpayer Matters</p>	<p>I am Sheryl Fernandez and I represent Broomfield Taxpayer Matters. BTM is a non-partisan 501c4 organization that focuses on matters of taxes. I was hoping to be there in person today, but I had some other committees that needed to be attended as well.</p> <p>BTM first wanted to thank the sponsors for bringing this bill and understanding the toll the HB20-1343 bill had on our friends, families, and neighbors by being a factor in large price increases for eggs. We are not unaware that the Avian Flu has been a contributing factor in a bit of a price increase due to the availability of eggs. Basic supply and demand. However, as of 1.1.25, it was a 15-17% increase that is a direct result of restrictions and insane requirements that burden our Agricultural community.</p> <p>Broomfield Taxpayer Matters urges you to vote YES on this bill to help hard working families afford the basics in their homes.</p>
<p>Diana Hurst For themselves</p>	<p>This was a failed bill that passed.</p> <p>Eggs are expensive and prices are not going down.</p> <p>Families are struggling financially with this policy.</p> <p>We know who the golden goose is.</p>

Dear Members of the Colorado House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB25-1074, which seeks to repeal the confinement standards established by House Bill 20-1343.

Eggs are a cornerstone of many households' diets in Colorado due to their high nutritional value and affordability compared to other protein sources. Their accessibility has made eggs a dietary staple, particularly for families seeking to maintain a nutritious diet on a budget. Colorado residents rely on eggs not only for their nutritional benefits but also for their role in countless recipes and meals.

The repeal of HB20-1343 is both economically and scientifically justified, as its continuation would worsen the financial burden on Colorado families and disregard vital findings regarding chicken welfare and mortality in cage-free systems.

The confinement standards mandated under HB20-1343 have significantly increased egg production costs of which are ultimately passed down to the customer. According to the Colorado Egg Producers Association¹, transitioning to cage-free systems has raised production costs by 16–18% due to the added labor, facility upgrades, and heightened risk of disease in larger environments. These costs have contributed directly to the dramatic rise in egg prices. Between September 2023 and September 2024, egg prices increased 39.6%, making them among the fastest-growing food costs in the nation². Many Colorado families are now forced to allocate more of their limited budgets to this essential staple.

Moreover, HB20-1343 disproportionately impacts low-income households, further worsening food insecurity in a time of economic uncertainty. With inflation, thanks to bipartisan and rapid expansion of the money supply, driving up costs across all essential goods, policies that elevate the price of basic proteins like eggs only deepen financial strain.

In addition to the economic concerns, HB20-1343 rests on the assumption that cage-free housing systems unequivocally promote chicken welfare. However, scientific evidence challenges this claim. A comprehensive meta-analysis titled “Laying hen mortality in different indoor housing systems: a meta-analysis of data from commercial farms in 16 countries”³ found that mortality rates among laying hens are significantly higher in cage-free systems compared to conventional systems. Specifically, the study revealed that hens housed in cage-free systems showed up to twice the mortality rate of those in conventional systems due to higher incidences of aggression, feather pecking, and disease transmission. These findings highlight that the transition to cage-

¹ Colorado Egg Producers Association's estimates of cost increases due to cage-free systems: Included in HB25-1074 legislative declaration.

² Egg price increase statistics: Bureau of Labor Statistics data cited in HB25-1074.

³ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-81868-3>.

free systems does not necessarily enhance chicken welfare and may, in fact, result in poorer outcomes for the hens.

While humane practices in agriculture are important, policies such as HB20-1343 fail to account for the complexities of chicken welfare science and place an undue economic burden on consumers. Repealing these regulations through HB25-1074 will provide immediate relief to Colorado families, stabilize egg prices, and ensure a more balanced approach to both economic and chicken welfare concerns.

It is also important to note that market-driven demand is a more effective and sustainable mechanism for achieving change than top-down government mandates. Consumer preferences for cage-free eggs are already influencing the industry, with many producers voluntarily transitioning to cage-free systems to meet these demands. This organic market evolution respects consumer choice, allowing individuals to decide what aligns with their values and budgets. Government-imposed mandates, like those in HB20-1343, distort the market by forcing all consumers to bear higher costs, regardless of their preferences or financial circumstances. A repeal of this law would allow the market to function freely while still accommodating the growing demand for cage-free options.

I urge you to support HB25-1074 and prioritize the well-being of Colorado's families and communities. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Lehnerz

Ft. Collins, Colorado

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Ft. Collins, Colorado

The record high egg prices nationwide and Colorado is not the result the of HB20-1343

Excerpt of USDA Egg Markets Overview Jan. 24, 2025 ,
https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/ams_3725.pdf

“2025 Commercial Table Egg Flock HPAI Losses

Outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in commercial table egg layer flocks that resulted in the depopulation of 13.2 million birds in December 2024 continue into the opening weeks of 2025. As of this week, 8 APHIS-confirmed outbreaks in 5 states (CA, NC, OH, MO, and IN) have resulted in the loss of 8.3 million birds – 6.8 million (82%) in conventional caged systems and 1.3 million (18%) in cage-free systems. These losses represent 3.7% of the conventional caged layer flock and 1.5% of the non-organic cagefree flock on January 1, 2025,

The impact of these losses in the marketplace continues to be influenced by the timing of the losses relative to demand patterns, the type of production systems affected, legislated restraints in certain states, and the intended use of the production either for in-shell or egg products use with most impact currently being felt in the retail cartoned sector.”

Excerpt Jan 2 2025 KUNC Colorado State University agricultural economist Dawn Thilmany,
<https://www.kunc.org/news/2025-01-02/colorados-new-cage-free-egg-law-takes-effect-in-the-new-year>

“...because so many producers transitioned to cage-free systems well ahead of the deadline, the market already absorbed those costs months or years ago.

The good news is, it is already baked in, Thilmany said. But the demand pressure is going to go down. Unless something really ramps up with avian influenza or some other shock that isn't about cage free, you've seen probably your high prices for this winter.”



LCS Committees <committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov>

Re: Submit written testimony

2 messages

Jessica Martinez <jesst57@gmail.com>
To: LCS Committees <committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 12:29 PM

Thank you, Elizabeth.

Please find my testimony here. My name has changed, so despite what the email says, I'm now Jessica Terry (catching up on the changes).

The legislature should not insert itself into food production requirements. The reason should be stated in the law for doing so if and when it does. The original 2020 law does not have any summarized reason for the new requirement.

Space requirements for egg laying hens may or may not affect the eggs quality. When is it the duty of legislature to stipulate requirements for the quality of food? Where legislature SHOULD be implementing laws is when there are proven dangers associated with a process or ingredient in foods. A great example of this is red dye which is known to be hazardous to health. Laws should be in place that restrict dangerous ingredients or contaminants into food. Restricting the production of real food adversely affects the production supply and the consumer. Losses on both counts.

Eggs are currently supply constrained. This causes the price to go up as a result of the known law of supply and demand interaction. Families with less discretionary income are the most affected by the increase in egg prices. I've seen empty shelves for the past month in my weekly shopping trips to Natural Grocers on Colorado Blvd. At King Soopers there are limited quantities ranging in prices from \$7.50-\$10 per dozen. They used to be a few bucks in both stores.

Eggs are part of a healthy diet where both have complete protein the body needs. They used to be a cheaper than chicken alternative on a per serving basis. Using today's online prices for chicken breast and a dozen cage free eggs at King Soopers is \$2 per pound and \$12 per dozen. An equal serving size per calories and health value is 3.5 ounces of chicken and 2 eggs. This yields \$0.88 and \$2 for chicken to egg price per serving, respectively, or over a 2X multiplier for eggs to chicken cost.

Using the Whole Foods app boneless skinless thighs are \$7 per pound and a dozen eggs are listed as being \$7.50 per dozen available in Lamar which is 3 hours away? The price comparison there is positive in the egg direction until you factor in the travel time to get the eggs if that is correct. Egg production is sustainable, chicken breasts are not.

The consumer can and should decide what quality of eggs they want to pay for to accommodate their preferences. This allows the producer and consumer to pick their ideal scenario. I support the current law to remove the restrictions placed on egg laying chickens.

Thank you,

Jessica Terry

On Jan 27, 2025, at 9:06 AM, LCS Committees <committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov> wrote:

Hi Jessica -

Our system does not send email confirmation for written testimony, however, I am not in receipt of your testimony. I apologize for this occurrence. If you want to reply to this email with your testimony, I will upload it for the committee's review.

Thanks,
Elizabeth Burger
Legislative Council Staff

On Sat, Jan 25, 2025 at 8:17 PM Jessica Martinez <jesst57@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello,

Please confirm I submitted written testimony in support of HB25-1074. I completed the fill-in form, but I did not receive a confirmation email stating that I did that—which I expected to receive. I don't want to submit a duplicate entry.

Thank you!
Jessica Terry

LCS Committees <committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov>
To: Jessica Martinez <jesst57@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 1:04 PM

Thanks - I have received this and shared it with the committee.

Thanks,
Elizabeth
[Quoted text hidden]



LCS Committees <committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov>

Write in on state website doesn't seem to be working

2 messages

Mike Stern <mxstern@gmail.com>
To: committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 1:55 PM

Letter concerning HB 25-1074**From:** Mike Stern [5160 E Kensington Ave, Castle Rock, CO 80104](#)**1/27/25****Subject:** HB 25-1074 (Repeal HB20-1343 to Protect Colorado Families and Food Affordability)

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding Colorado's HB20-1343, the "Confinement Standards for Egg-Laying Hens" legislation, which has caused a sharp increase in egg prices and is negatively affecting hardworking families across the state. While I support humane treatment of animals, this law has far-reaching consequences that disproportionately harm consumers and mid-level egg producers, while exempting large corporations and small-scale operations.

Since the law took effect on January 1, 2023, egg prices in Colorado have skyrocketed—rising by over 200% since 2022. A dozen eggs that cost \$2.99 now cost \$8.99, leaving single parents, senior citizens, and low-income families struggling to afford a basic, nutritious staple. These price increases have significantly impacted food affordability and security, forcing Coloradans to make difficult choices at the grocery store.

Furthermore, the policy requiring the destruction of healthy chickens exposed to bird flu has exacerbated the crisis by weakening flock immunity and contributing to shortages. Meanwhile, HB20-1343 imposes heavy financial burdens on mid-level egg producers, who must meet costly requirements for cage-free environments with "enrichments" like scratch areas, perches, and dust-bathing spaces. This has unfairly penalized family-owned farms while giving large corporations a competitive edge, creating an uneven playing field.

What's more troubling is that these regulations were delayed until after the 2020 and 2022 elections, conveniently shielding legislators from accountability for their actions. Now, Coloradans are facing the consequences of this poorly crafted legislation, which prioritizes government overreach and cronyism over the well-being of its citizens.

It is time to take action. I urge you to introduce or support legislation to repeal HB20-1343 (HB 25-1074) and restore choice and affordability to Colorado consumers. Families should have the freedom to decide whether to purchase more expensive cage-free eggs, rather than being forced into higher costs by misguided policies.

We need lawmakers who prioritize the needs of their constituents over bureaucratic overreach and special interests. Please work to address this issue and ensure that Colorado families are no longer burdened by unnecessary costs at the grocery store.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response and hope you will stand with the hardworking people of our state.

Sincerely,
Mike Stern

mxstern@gmail.com

360-689-9058

LCS Committees <committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov>
To: Mike Stern <mxstern@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 4:54 PM

Thanks Mike - I received this and your other email as well, and have shared your statements with the relevant committees.. I will have my IT team take a look at the registration website.

Thanks,
Elizabeth Burger
Legislative Council Staff
[Quoted text hidden]