



**NATIONAL CONSUMERS LEAGUE**

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Dear Member of Congress:

The National Consumers League (NCL) is the nation's pioneer consumer advocacy organization and has been working to protect consumers since 1899. Part of that mission is ensuring that Americans have access to a food supply that is both safe and accurately represented. We are proud of our history supporting the Pure Food and Drugs Act of 1906, the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Food Safety Modernization Act. Because of this commitment to a safe food supply and transparent food labeling and advertising, NCL is proud to support H.R. 3798, The Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments of 2012.

This bipartisan bill is the result of a landmark agreement between the Humane Society of the United States and the United Egg Producers. The agreement between egg producers and animal protection activists includes several provisions which are beneficial to consumers.

First, the bill would phase out the use of battery cages and phase in larger, enriched colony cages, which provide each hen with twice the space as well as enrichments that allow the hens to better express their natural behaviors. Some studies have shown that eggs laid in battery cages have higher rates of Salmonella and Campylobacter than do those laid by cage free hens. This is due to several factors, including crowded conditions which increase stress. Increased stress leads to higher rates of disease, diseases which hens may pass to consumers through the eggs they lay. Larger cages, which allow for hens to engage in natural behaviors such as nesting, result in lower levels of stress and are likely to lead to lower rates of foodborne illness.

Second, the bill includes a labeling provision. It would require that egg cartons bear a label indicating whether the eggs were laid by hens in conventional battery cages, enriched colony cages, or cage-free or free-range environments. These labels would increase transparency regarding production and allow consumers more information that will help them make informed decisions about what type of production methods they want to support.

Consumers are increasingly concerned about how their food is produced. They are concerned not only about foodborne illness but also about how the animals producing their food are treated. H.R. 3798 addresses both of these concerns and is supported by both animal protection activists and the egg industry itself, as well as by scientific groups such as the American Veterinary Medical Association.

We encourage you to co-sponsor this bipartisan piece of legislation which will ensure a better life for laying hens and more transparency for consumers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sally Greenberg", is written over a white rectangular background.

Sally Greenberg