



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Mark C. Scarsi
United States District Court
Central District of California

Dear Judge Scarsi:

I am writing to respectfully share with the Court PETA's newly released [white paper](#) regarding the welfare impacts of "cage-free" egg production systems, as you're no doubt thinking carefully about California's cage-free law. I hope this document will serve as a useful resource in evaluating the real-world conditions that these systems create for hens and the implications for consumers who are misled by "cage-free" labels. Surprisingly perhaps, "cage-free" does much less than people typically imagine to reduce hens' suffering.

The white paper outlines extensive evidence that cage-free systems have failed to provide meaningful welfare improvements for the animals. In fact, the findings indicate that these systems can lead to increased suffering in some respects, including higher rates of feather pecking, fighting, cannibalism, and crowd-crush incidents due to the density of birds housed together. The report also details that 85% to 97% of hens in cage-free systems experience painful keel bone fractures, along with chronic respiratory issues and skin lesions caused by ammonia-saturated litter and poor air quality.

The document further highlights the disconnect between consumer expectations and the realities of cage-free production, noting that many individuals pay a premium, believing that they are supporting humane practices. At the same time, the market for vegan eggs—such as the delicious offerings of U.S.-based JUST Egg and WunderEggs—continues to grow rapidly and shows that there are companies not caught up in misleading marketing and that are not part of egg production that allows avian flu outbreaks to occur.

For the animals' sake, we hope Prop 12 stands, only because to overturn it could be extremely damaging to other truly humane protections for animals who desperately need them. We fully support a kinder world, but it does not stop at "cage-free."

Thank you for your time and consideration of this material.

Sincerely,

Tracy Reiman
President
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