

August 27, 2008

San Diego City Council  
Rules, Open Government and Intergovernmental Relations Committee  
202 C Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Diego, CA 92101

It has been brought to our attention that the Rules, Open Government and Intergovernmental Relations Committee will consider taking a position on Proposition 2, the Standards for Confining Farm Animals measure that will appear on the November 4<sup>th</sup> General election ballot. On behalf of San Diego County's many egg producers and the larger farm community I am writing to ask that you carefully weigh more than the emotional arguments that surround this issue.

San Diego County has a long history of egg production and in 2007 the wholesale value of locally produced eggs was \$56,338,333 according to figures from the County of San Diego Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures. When considering Proposition 2 please note that San Diego County is not a production region for veal calves or pigs, so the entire impact of the ballot measure here will be on the multi-generational farmers who care for egg-laying hens.

I have enclosed for your consideration a recent study, the *Economic Effects of Proposed Restrictions on Egg-laying Hen Housing in California* by a team from the University of California, Davis. Their analysis on the ballot measure contains the following passage:

*“Our analysis indicates that the expected impact would be the almost complete elimination of egg production in California within the five-year adjustment period. Non-cage production costs are simply too far above the costs of the cage systems used in other states to allow California producers to compete with imported eggs in the conventional egg market. The most likely outcome, therefore, is the elimination of almost all of the California egg industry over a few years.”*

In citing the fact that out-of-state or out-of-country farms would fill the market void left by the exiting California producers the analysis states:

*“Thus the impact of the initiative would not affect how eggs would be produced, only where eggs would be produced.”*

While the economics of this issue are critical to the local family farmers who will lose their livelihoods and their hundreds of employees who will lose their jobs, there is more to consider.

Proposition 2 wields a message that farmers caring for egg-laying hens treat their birds poorly. The truth is that farmers know their success depends on healthy and content animals. Without advanced animal welfare practices egg production would diminish and farms would fail. Farmers protect their animals' health and follow the advice of veterinarians, animal scientists, agricultural engineers, and animal well-being experts.

From an environmental standpoint we are all beginning to recognize the value of locally produced farm products. Chasing away local farmers only to have our needs met by eggs trucked hundreds or thousand of miles from other states or Mexico is a step in the wrong direction.

Please think beyond the easily stoked emotions of Proposition 2 and support the reality of the humane production of eggs right here in San Diego County.

Sincerely,

Chuck Badger  
President