



Assemblymember Damon Connolly, 12th District
AB 1232 – ESTABLISHING THE RESILIENT FARMS AND RANCHES PROGRAM
FACT SHEET

BACKGROUND

Proposition 12, formally titled the “Prevention of Cruelty to Farm Animals Act,” passed in California in 2018. The law received overwhelming support, with 63 percent of the vote. It establishes minimum requirements for farmers to provide adequate space for hens, pigs used for breeding (room to lie down and turn around), and calves used for veal. Animal products sold in California, including products imported from other states, must follow those requirements. The law also addresses public health concerns by reducing extreme confinement conditions that have been shown to increase risk of food safety and pandemic threats.

In October, the Supreme Court heard arguments over Proposition 12 in a case brought by the National Pork Producers Council and American Farm Bureau Federation with claims the law burdens interstate commerce with no local benefit to California. California’s argument in support of the law stated voters’ local interest is in “refusing to provide a market to products they viewed as morally objectionable or unsafe.”

ISSUE

Consumers are [increasingly](#) interested in, and willing to pay more for, animal products from farms using more humane animal husbandry practices. Public institutions, as part of broader food procurement policies like the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP), are increasingly sourcing welfare-certified animal products. Fourteen California school districts, including Los Angeles, Oakland, San Diego, and San Francisco- representing over \$145 million in purchasing power- have adopted GFPP and are actively seeking to source from welfare-certified farmers in California. Some California farmers are already tapping into these markets for animal welfare-certified products, but there is a gap in the supply of local, welfare-certified producers to meet growing demand.

In conjunction with the impending regulatory requirements of Proposition 12, this increasing demand has created a legitimate and urgent need to support producers as they implement and expand cage-free, crate-free and animal welfare-certified systems. Additionally, rapidly increasing climate impacts threaten animal health and the economic well-being of California farmers and ranchers, costs that will ultimately be passed to consumers.

Socially disadvantaged farmers recognize the shifting consumer interest toward higher welfare practices, but

frequently lack the resources required to make the on-farm improvements necessary to meet the growing demand. These farmers and ranchers are also the most vulnerable to climate impacts.

EXISTING LAW

Existing law requires covered animals under Proposition 12 be housed in confinement systems that comply with specific minimum standards for freedom of movement, cage-free design, and minimum floor space, and identifies covered animals to include veal calves, breeding pigs and egg-laying hens, as specified. Existing law requires the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to ensure the inclusion of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, as defined, in the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of food and agriculture laws, regulations, and policies and programs, as specified, under the [Farmer Equity Act of 2017](#).

THIS BILL

AB 1232 establishes the Resilient Farms and Ranches Program under the Animal Care division of CDFA. The Program will grant funding for projects that enhance or expand animal welfare practices, with preference for achieving or maintaining participation in an independent animal welfare certification program, but also including costs associated with technical assistance, climate adaptation and mitigation improvements to safeguard animal welfare, enhanced small or mobile processing capacity, and/or expanding an existing welfare-certified operation. This bill would require the Department to give first preference to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and producers in disadvantaged communities under the guidance of the Farmer Equity Act.

SUPPORT

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Sponsor)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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