

I am a citizen of Ohio and I am writing in support of HB 175 Ohio Urban Homesteading. Our family lives in the City of Perrysburg on 3/4 acre with a flock of 6 hens who are dearly loved. I would like to list some of the benefits our family has experienced.

1. Pet Therapy: I am not kidding here. Hens are currently being used for pet therapy to reduce loneliness & depression in nursing homes. I love walking up to their run in the morning & after work as they all come running to greet me with their happy sounds. They are not loud. They will make sounds when one of their sisters is laying an egg or when they've laid their egg, but that lasts maybe 30 seconds & is quieter than a barking dog, crying baby or vacuum cleaner. Hens are really fun to watch & we call it chicken TV around here. When it's warmer out, I enjoy sitting out there with them as they scratch around in their run & curiously interact, or let me pet their feathers.

2. Eggs: When we started out, we considered our hens pets with the benefit of getting eggs. The eggs of a pet hen are better in flavor & nutrition in comparison to store bought eggs. We did not know that initially, but now when I eat a store bought egg it tastes anemic.

3. Manure & compost: I compost & garden, & our hens manure is a perfect addition to our compost bins. It facilitates the breaking-down process & enriches the soil. For perspective, the amount of manure produced weekly by my 6 hens is less than what is produced by 1, 40 # dog in 1 day. Also, dog poo cannot be used for manure -- it's waste.

With hens, the manure is not hard to clean up & I can toss it in my contained compost bin so smell is a non-issue, & smell should not be an issue as long as hens are kept dry with routine cleaning.

4. Mulch: The old pine shavings used in the coop are recycled into the the garden as a mulch in the walkways.

5. Less waste: Chickens are voracious eaters so that cuts down on food waste & trash.

6. Garden preparation & clean up: Each Spring before I seed or plant the garden, the hens are allowed into the raised beds of the vegetable garden to scratch around, eat insects & till for me. In the Fall, they have another frolic during the clean-up process in preparation for Winter.

7. Less insects: Although the City of Perrysburg limits our hens freedoms, hens do love to free range & scratch. This reduces bugs, grubs, slugs & other insect thugs that like to eat beloved plants. They also enjoy eating ticks & mosquitoes.

As a side note, we have not experienced salmonella illness in all the 12+years we've raised an orphaned snake, turtle, & our hens. Proper hand-washing after handling animals is key along with hygienic cooking practices.

It takes dedication getting up each morning to feed & water the hens, & to close the coop door at night, but we so enjoy them & are dedicated to the process. I hope this bill passes so others may enjoy what our family has enjoyed over the years. Self-sustainable practices, knowing where your food comes from, & experiencing the alternative to store-bought food is a benefit to all of us. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. If you have any further questions or other ways I can help in the process, please feel free to e-mail or call.