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January 7, 2013

The Honorable Gilbert L. Wilson
New Jersey General Assembly
State House
Trenton, NJ 08625-0098

RE: Veterinary Support for A.3250

Dear Assemblymember Wilson:

I am writing on behalf of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association (HSVMA), a national organization of approximately 4,500 veterinary professional members with a focus on the health and welfare of animals. We want to convey our strong support for your bill (A.3250) that would ban the extreme confinement of breeding sows in gestation crates. Joining with our association, 100 individual licensed New Jersey veterinarians have also signed the letter.

There is significant scientific evidence to support common-sense reform on this farm animal protection issue. Confining breeding sows in tiny crates causes them great suffering; it is an archaic practice that should now be ended.

Renowned animal welfare scientist Dr. Temple Grandin says, "Gestation crates are a real problem. Basically you're asking a sow to live in an airline seat." The Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production—which was funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, and included a former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture—recommended that "all systems that restrict natural movement," including gestation crates, be phased out. Dr. Bernard Rollin of Colorado State University's animal science department echoed the prevailing scientific viewpoint when he said: "Animals built to move must move."

A better alternative to gestation crates is "group housing," which provides resident animals with greater freedom of movement. Researchers at Iowa State University have found that "*reproductive performance can be maintained or enhanced in well-managed group housing systems...without increasing labor.*" They also concluded that

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“group housing ... resulted in a weaned pig cost that was 11 percent less than the cost of a weaned pig from the individual stall confinement system.”

Establishing an animal cruelty offense for the inhumane confinement of gestating pigs is a reasonable common-sense reform. Thank you for your leadership on this issue and for introducing A.3250.

Sincerely,



Barbara Hodges, DVM, MBA
Veterinary Advisor
HSVMA Advocacy/Policy Division

Joined by the following 100 New Jersey veterinarians:

Dr. Donna Alfieri, East Hanover	Dr. Andrea Danforth, Secaucus
Dr. Renee Alsarraf, Fairfield	Dr. Edie DeMaria, Mahwah
Dr. Laura Acosta, Jersey City	Dr. Robert M. Diener, Whitehouse Station
Dr. Kimberly Ashford, Riverside	Dr. Sandra M. Dudek, Newton
Dr. Jamie Ayres, Avenel	Dr. Kimberly Farina, Madison
Dr. Lawrence Badalamenti, Montville	Dr. Lauren Feldman, Belle Mead
Dr. Laney Baris, Forked River	Dr. Joseph P. Fenton, Howell
Dr. Sarah Barnes, Roseland	Dr. Anastasia Ferrante, Montville
Dr. Jenna Beras, Woodbury Heights	Dr. Maria Fjerstad, Robbinsville
Dr. Sue Bliesath, Long Valley	Dr. Andrea S. Freeman, Raritan
Dr. Neil Bloom, Avenel	Dr. Joel R. Friedman, Avenel
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