



March 4, 2024

The Honorable Steve Bennett
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, 4710
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 3162, The Oppose Cruelty to Octopuses (OCTO) Act - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Bennett,

On behalf of the Animal Legal Defense Fund and Social Compassion in Legislation, we write as proud co-sponsors of AB 3162 - The Oppose Cruelty to Octopuses (OCTO) Act, which would prohibit the farming of octopuses and the importation of farmed octopuses within the state of California. This measure positions California as a humane leader on this developing issue, preempting the controversial and cruel industry before it has an opportunity to develop in the state.

Octopuses are sentient beings with significant cognitive abilities and can learn new skills, navigate complex mazes, are known escape artists, and even use tools. Due to their complex mental ability, octopuses have high enrichment needs that simply cannot be met in farming environments. Intensively confining these highly intelligent, solitary animals in unnatural farming conditions is inhumane, as there is a high likelihood of stress, aggressive activity, and high mortality among octopuses in these settings.

In addition to these welfare concerns, the environmental implications of octopus farming are manifold. These carnivorous animals require diets rich in marine ingredients at a 3:1 food conversion ratio, exacerbating the pressure on already declining wild fish populations and undermining global sustainable development goals. Large-scale aquatic farms serve as breeding grounds for pathogenic bacteria, contributing to the dangerous proliferation of multidrug-resistant bacteria. The discharge of new effluents and the risk of farm escapes threaten local ecosystems and biodiversity, emphasizing the need for stringent environmental safeguards.

Further, the introduction of octopus farming could pose significant public health risks. The overuse of antibiotics in aquaculture has been linked to the emergence of multidrug-resistant bacteria, with potential spillover effects into human populations.

Octopus farming is unsustainable, environmentally destructive, and inhumane. We believe now is the time to take proactive steps to protect these magnificent creatures to ensure that octopus farms, and the inherent risks that come with them, do not come to California and California doesn't support octopus farming elsewhere in the world. We thank you for your leadership on this critically important issue and we look forward to partnering with you on it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Hauge".

Jennifer Hauge
Senior Legislative Affairs Manager
Animal Legal Defense Fund

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nickolaus Sackett".

Nickolaus Sackett
Director of Legislative Affairs
Social Compassion in Legislation