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**For immediate release:**  
February 20, 2024

**Octopus Farming Ban Introduced in California**

*AB 3162 will ensure that octopus farms, and the inherent risks that come with them, are not allowed in California*

**SACRAMENTO, February 20, 2024 — Assemblymember Steve Bennett (D-Ventura)** has introduced **AB 3162, the Oppose Cruelty to Octopuses (OCTO) Act**, to prohibit octopus farming on land or water and ban the import of farmed octopus in California. The bill, cosponsored by **Animal Legal Defense Fund** and **Social Compassion in Legislation**, 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.

Methods of slaughtering octopuses have historically been highly inhumane, including clubbing, slicing, asphyxiation, and chilling. These animals have significant cognitive abilities and can learn new skills, navigate complex mazes, are known escape artists, and even use tools. Intensively confining these highly intelligent, solitary animals in unnatural farming conditions is inhumane and almost certain to result in stress, aggressive activity, and high mortality.

“These highly functional creatures have captured our fascination for as long as we have been telling stories,” said **Assemblymember Steve Bennett**. “Octopuses are primarily solitary creatures that are not suited for large scale breeding. They have demonstrated an aptitude for learning and their acute intelligence is becoming well recorded among the scientific community. Outside the U.S., there is a growing trend of recognizing the sentience of this eight-legged cephalopod and the inappropriateness of captive breeding and

harvesting it. AB 3162 will prevent needless, systemic harm to these captivating animals.”

“Jurisdictions around the world, including California, are restricting or banning various forms of aquaculture due to its negative environmental impact and the risk of bacterial, viral, and parasitic infections in marine life,” said **Judie Mancuso, Founder and President of Social Compassion in Legislation**. “Factory farms are environmental disasters whether on land or in the water, and the cruelty inherent in their business model is unspeakable. Octopus aquaculture would be a harmful and truly inhumane practice, and AB 3162 will prevent it from getting established in our great state.”

“This is a key moment, not only in California but around the country, in the effort to protect octopuses from the scale of suffering that other animals already endure on factory farms,” said **Animal Legal Defense Fund Senior Legislative Affairs Manager, Jennifer Hauge**. “Californians have demonstrated their concern for the welfare of animals, and this bill is an opportunity to continue that commitment by leading on this issue with proactive critical legislation. We commend Assemblymember Bennett’s efforts to stop octopus farming in its tracks in California.”

In addition to animal welfare concerns, octopus farming could have problematic environmental consequences. Aquaculture facilities for octopuses have the potential to create an increased risk of nitrogen and phosphorus runoff, contributing to environmental pollution and potential algal blooms that would create low-oxygen dead zones devoid of life, disrupting local marine ecosystems. Antibiotics and pesticides may also be used to control the spread of disease and presence of parasites — as they already are with sea lice in salmon farms — and these can end up in the diets of wild fish, making them sick and disrupting food chains.

Similar bills have also been introduced in Washington state (H.B. 1153) and Hawaii (H.B. 2262). With AB 3162, California can join the effort to save these magnificent creatures and once again show it is a global leader on animal rights.