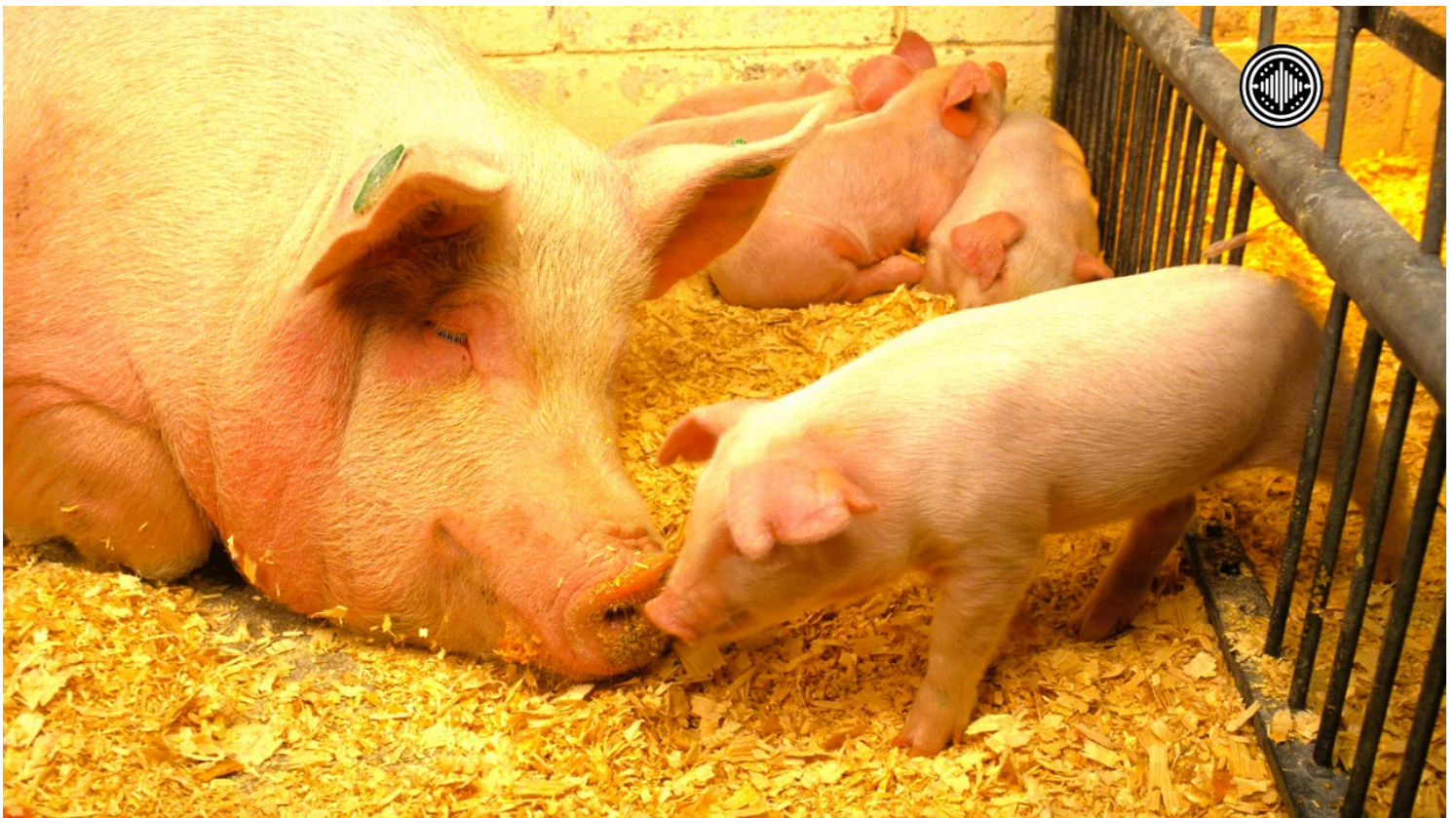


Supreme Court Declines to Hear Iowa Pork Producers' Challenge to California's Animal Welfare Law

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WASHINGTON – The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday declined to review an appeal from the Iowa Pork Producers Association, leaving California's Proposition 12 in place and delivering a major setback to pork producers across the country.

Proposition 12, which California voters approved in 2018, requires pork sold in the state to come from farms where breeding pigs have at least 24 square feet of space. Many large-

scale farms use smaller pens known as gestation crates, and meeting California's standards would require expensive renovations.

More than 20 states joined Iowa in challenging the law. They argued that California was overstepping its authority by forcing out-of-state farmers to change their practices to keep selling products in California. Industry groups said the rule would cost millions of dollars to comply with and increase pork prices for consumers nationwide.

"I am disappointed with the Supreme Court's decision to not hear the Iowa Pork Producers' case to stop California's mandate against Iowa farmers," said Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird. "States like California and Massachusetts should not dictate Iowa farming practices. Laws like this hurt Iowa's rural communities and make it harder for Americans to enjoy the world-class pork products they have come to love."

The Supreme Court's decision follows a 2023 ruling in which the justices also sided with California. In that case, the Court decided the law did not violate the Constitution's Commerce Clause, which limits states from controlling business activities in other states.

Supporters of Proposition 12 celebrated Monday's development. "This is a win for animals and for consumers who want to know their food comes from farms that treat animals more humanely," said Suzanne York, a spokesperson for the Humane Farming Coalition.

Pork industry leaders, however, warned the ruling could lead to confusion if more states pass their own regulations. They said farmers could soon face a patchwork of rules that are costly and difficult to follow.

Despite the loss, Iowa officials promised to continue legal efforts to protect farmers from similar laws. "We will keep fighting for our producers," Bird said.

For now, any pork sold in California supermarkets must comply with the stricter animal welfare standards, signaling a shift in how pork is produced and sold across the country.