



Santa Cruz Bird Club

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March 29th, 2019

Statement in Support of AB 1788 (California Ecosystems Protection Act)

Dear Honorable Members of the California Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee:

The Santa Cruz Bird Club is in support of AB 1788, introduced by Assemblymember Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica). The bill would ban second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) in California—the most toxic, “one-feeding kills” poisons—as well as first generation anticoagulants (FGARs) on state-owned properties. These products are having widespread impacts on our state’s ecosystems, in particular, California’s treasured Raptors as well as other bird species.

Although the California Department of Pesticide Regulation pulled second generation anticoagulants from consumer shelves in July 2014, there has been no decrease in the rate of wildlife poisoning from these products. The continued use of rodenticides by licensed pest control applicators still allows rodents to consume rodenticides and then poison non-target wildlife (and even pets) who consume the rodents themselves. In fact, based on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s own studies, from 2014 to 2018, an estimated 70 to 90% of various tested wildlife species in the state were found to have SGARs in their systems. Simply put, the evidence shows that a consumer ban on SGARs alone is insufficient to protect California’s ecosystems and further steps must be taken. AB 1788 would ensure that use of these harmful toxins are prohibited full-stop in the State of California, while still leaving licensed applicators and consumers with ample tools to address rodent infestations.

AB 1788 will also help the state eliminate the use of dangerous poisons on state properties, many of which are home to wildlife, through the additional prohibition on the use of FGARs on state-owned properties. While SGARs have higher toxicity than prior generations, both first and second generation anticoagulants are responsible for non-targeted wildlife deaths and “sublethal” impacts that affect the ability of wildlife to survive and thrive. It has been proven that non-targeted species, such as Northern spotted owls, San Joaquin kit foxes, and Pacific fishers are threatened species that are being endangered by these poisons. New scientific studies published in 2018 by UC Davis, the California Academy of Sciences, and others show that **70 percent of Northern spotted owls** have been contaminated with anticoagulant rodenticides. A separate 2018 study by UCLA and others found that these poisons are affecting genes that regulate bobcat immune systems.

AB 1788 allows for common sense controls on anticoagulant rodenticides by banning the most toxic rodenticides throughout the state, while providing exemptions for agricultural activities and true public health emergencies. The scientific evidence is clear that anticoagulant rodenticides – particularly SGARs – have a massive impact on California's ecosystems, non-targeted wildlife and a declining bird population. The state must act now to prevent the continued degradation of our wildlife and environment.

California strives to be a world leader on environmental protection and animal welfare. The passage of AB 1788 will prove that California is an environmental world leader. Santa Cruz Bird Club urges you to support AB 1788, which will protect the health of our state's natural ecosystems, and all of the wildlife and threatened bird population in the food web.

Sincerely,

Lisa Sheridan,

President of the Santa Cruz Bird Club