

For Immediate Release, September 29, 2020

Contact:

Lisa Owens Viani, Raptors Are The Solution, (510) 549-2963, lowensvi@icloud.com

Jonathan Evans, Center for Biological Diversity, (510) 844-7118,

[jеванс@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:jevans@biologicaldiversity.org)

Mike Andrade-Heymsfield, Animal Legal Defense Fund, (707) 364-8387,

media@aldf.org

Gov. Newsom Signs Bill Protecting Wild Animals from Super-toxic Rat Poisons

California Leads the Nation on Safeguards for Second-generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the California Ecosystems Protection Act ([AB 1788](#)) into law today, placing greater restrictions — with limited exceptions — on the use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides to protect the state's native wildlife.

The bill, introduced by Assemblymember Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica), requires state regulators to reduce the threats to nontarget wildlife before the restrictions on second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides can be lifted.

“Anticoagulants are wiping out the very wildlife that help control rodents naturally. There is a groundswell of support for this bill, which takes a giant step to reduce secondary poisoning,” said Lisa Owens Viani, director of Raptors Are The Solution.

“We can protect public health without threatening California’s wildlife,” said Jonathan Evans, environmental health legal director at the Center for Biological Diversity. “We applaud Governor Newsom and Assemblymember Bloom for their leadership in protecting California’s mountain lions, bobcats and kit foxes.”

Rodents that consume these long-lasting poisons are in turn consumed by other wildlife, resulting in secondary poisoning and contamination of the food chain. Developed in the 1970s, second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides have higher potency than earlier compounds. A single dose has a half-life of more than 100 days in a rat’s liver.

“These ‘one-feeding-kills’ poisons are devastating California’s wild animals, including some of the state’s most beloved species like mountain lions,” said Stephen Wells, executive director of the Animal Legal Defense Fund. “California has taken a critical step towards safeguarding these animals from unnecessary suffering and death.”

Despite a 2014 ban on consumer sales, rodenticides continue to be heavily used by commercial operators. The California Department of Pesticide Regulation’s 2018 [analysis](#) of 11 wildlife studies determined anticoagulant rodenticides are poisoning a

wide range of animals, including mountain lions, bobcats, hawks and endangered wildlife such as Pacific fishers, spotted owls and San Joaquin kit foxes.

There are many safer alternatives to anticoagulant rodenticides. Exclusion and sanitation are the best approach to managing rodents. Sealing buildings, eliminating food and water sources, and trimming foliage and tree limbs from the sides and roofs of houses are also important steps to reduce the presence of rodents. When physical exclusion is not possible, there are dozens of safer rodent control options including providing owl boxes in rural areas to encourage natural predation and using traps that don't involve these highly toxic chemicals.

AB 1788 was cosponsored by the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Center for Biological Diversity, and Raptors Are The Solution.

Background

Anticoagulant rodenticides interfere with blood clotting, resulting in uncontrollable bleeding that leads to death. Super-toxic poisons include the second-generation anticoagulants brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difethialone and difenacoum, which are especially hazardous and persist for a long time in body tissues. Predators and scavengers that feed on poisoned rodents are frequently poisoned by these slow-acting rodenticides.

The harm caused by second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides in California is well documented. More than 70% of wildlife tested in California in recent years has been exposed to dangerous rodenticides, including more than 25 different species.

For more information on nontoxic rodent-control methods, visit <https://www.raptorsarethesolution.org/instead-of-poison-print-friendly/> or SafeRodentControl.org.

[Raptors Are The Solution](#) is a nonprofit project of Earth Island Institute based in Berkeley, CA, dedicated to educating the public about the ecological role of birds of prey and other predatory wildlife and the danger they face from rodenticides.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.7 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund works to protect the lives and advance the interests of animals through the legal system with high-impact lawsuits; free legal assistance to prosecutors; legislative advocacy; and resources for law students and professionals to advance the field of animal law. aldf.org.



Image available for media use. Photo credit: Joe Galkowski/Raptors Are The Solution