



The Honorable Antony Portantino
Senate Appropriations Committee
California State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

August 7, 2020

RE: AB 1788 (Bloom): SUPPORT

Dear Chair Portantino,

We, the signed organizations, are in support of AB 1788, California Ecosystems Protection Act (Bloom), and urge you to support this legislation in the Appropriations Committee hearing. This novel piece of legislation would prohibit the use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) in California, a poisonous chemical that has helped us control rat populations at the cost of destroying our wildlife populations.

The situation is dire for California's wildlife. Rodenticides currently affect at least 38 of California species including mountain lions, bobcats, cooper's hawks, northern spotted owls, San Joaquin kit foxes, and pacific fishers. Studies analyzed by the Department of Pesticide Regulation have found SGARs in 90% of mountain lions, 88% of bobcats, and 85% of pacific fishers. Another study conducted by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife found SGARS in 70%-90% of all of the tested wildlife. Mountain lions are especially affected by the presence of SGARs as evidenced by the deaths of multiple mountain lions tracked by the National Parks Service and by the near death of P-22 due to mange caused by SGARs exposure. The presence of SGARs in the blood of these animals will cause them to slowly die of hemorrhage once the level reaches above a certain threshold. Given how many animals are affected by this poison, the continuous use of SGARs can cause massive die-offs and could lead to the extinction of California's megafauna if nothing is done to regulate SGAR usage.

This bill will help California's biodiversity bounce back while minimizing the economic impact of banning the use of SGARs. The bill exempts industries that use rodenticides to help protect public health, such as food storage warehouses and medical research facilities, and also allows the use of SGARs in case of widespread public health emergencies. Recent amendments also state that the Department of Pesticide Regulation may reverse this ban if they adopt SGAR standards that will still protect wildlife populations. There are also plenty of ways to reduce rat populations without the use of rodenticides including sealing buildings, eliminating waste, or using snap traps, electric traps, and fertility control. Thus, banning the use of SGARs until better measures are in place should not significantly impair industries that use rodenticides as they still have plenty of tools to help keep the rat population at bay. Overreliance on one pest management tool can cause pests to adapt to that tool, as seen when rats developed a resistance to first-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (FGARs) causing many funds to be funneled into SGAR research and development.

We hope that you support this measure as a way to help save California's wildlife. Protecting wild species is just as important as protecting public health for we cannot survive if our ecosystems collapse. We respectfully urge you and your colleagues to vote yes on AB 1788 at the next Appropriations Committee Hearing.

Sincerely,



Howard Penn
Executive Director
Planning and Conservation League



Beth Pratt
Regional Executive Director, California
National Wildlife Federation