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

Dear Honorable Members of the California Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee:

Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR) is writing 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 wildlife, as well as creating unnecessary risk to the health and safety of our state’s children and household pets.

Since 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.

Additionally, AB 1788 would 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 **wildlife deaths** and **“sublethal” impacts** that affect the ability of wildlife to survive and thrive. 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.

In addition to harming wildlife, anticoagulants rodenticides pose an unreasonable risk to children who may accidentally ingest these highly toxic poisons. Between 1999 and 2009, the American Association of Poison Control Centers received reports of an average of 17,000 human exposures to rodenticides each year, with 85% of these exposures, (i.e., approximately 15,000 per year), occurring to children less than 6 years of age.



570 W. AVE 26 #250
LOS ANGELES
CA 90065
323.223.0585
CONTACT@FOLAR.ORG

AB 1788 allows for common sense controls on anticoagulant rodenticides by only 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 and the state must act *now* to prevent the continued degradation of our wildlife and environment.

California has the opportunity to continue to be a world leader on environmental protection and animal welfare through the passage of AB 1788. FoLAR urges you to support AB 1788, which will protect the health of our state’s natural ecosystems, and all of the wildlife in the food web.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Marissa Christiansen
Executive Director
Friends of the Los Angeles River