



AB 2552: First-Generation anticoagulant rodenticides

Summary:

The Poison-Free Wildlife Act places a moratorium on some of the most dangerous rodenticides, which cause widespread poisoning of wildlife, with exceptions to protect public health and agriculture. It allows community members to bring legal action on their own behalf or on behalf of an animal harmed by the illegal use or sale of anticoagulant rodenticides. It also includes stronger protections from rodenticides in areas officially designated as wildlife habitat.

Background:

In 2020, the state passed the California Ecosystems Protection Act of 2020 (AB 1788) to minimize unintended poisonings from one subset of particularly dangerous rodenticides—Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs)—by placing a moratorium on certain uses until more comprehensive restrictions are developed.

Despite the implementation of AB 1788 in 2021, recent evidence from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) suggests there is still widespread exposure and deaths to wildlife from SGARs and other anticoagulant rodenticides.

A 2022 CDFW study found that over 88 percent of raptors, 80 percent of large game mammals, and 79 percent of non-game animals had exposure to anticoagulant rodenticides, including SGARs and First Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (FGARs). Wildlife protected under the state or federal Endangered Species Act, such as Swainson's hawks, San Joaquin kit foxes, northern spotted owls, and candidates for listing, such as Southern California and Central Coast mountain lions, are among those experiencing high exposure rates.

In 2023, the state passed the California Ecosystems Protection Act of 2023, which added the FGAR diphacinone, into the moratorium, but did not add the two remaining FGARs: chlorophacinone and warfarin.

Anticoagulant rodenticides continue to cause an unreasonable number of public health incidents with

over 3,000 human poisonings in 2021 and at least 2,300 of those involving children under 6 years, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

Rodenticides also pose an unreasonable risk to pets and domestic animals. Between 1999 and 2009, rodenticides killed or poisoned about 160 domestic animals, which the Environmental Protection Agency believes is a significant underestimate.

Rodenticides can also be counterproductive to rodent control by poisoning and killing natural predators that help regulate rodent populations throughout California.

Numerous safer alternatives to anticoagulant rodenticides are available. Exclusion, sanitation, and physical controls are the most sustainable long-term rodent control solution. Fertility control products have also proved effective and are now widely available. Over 100 different rodenticide products registered for use in California would still be available for use under this bill.

AB 2552 (2.14.2024):

AB 2552 adds the remaining FGARs, chlorophacinone and warfarin, to the existing rodenticide moratorium to better protect wildlife from unintentional poisoning, while maintaining exceptions for their use to protect public health, water supplies and agriculture. The bill also prohibits the use of anticoagulant rodenticides within 5,000 feet of a wildlife habitat area. It further allows community members to bring legal action against illegal use or sale of anticoagulant rodenticides to reduce enforcement costs on state and local officials.

Support:

Center for Biological Diversity (co-sponsor)
Raptors are the Solution (co-sponsor)

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