

From: Donald Heitzmann, 45 Hillside Drive, Exeter R.I.

Re: House Bill 7783

TO: Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Dear Committee members:

I write in support of the banning of second-generation anticoagulation rodenticides in our state, as expressed in bill 7783. I am a retired software engineer who spends many hours a week walking our woods and trails, enjoying nature and in particular enjoying our birds. I'm heavily involved with the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, as a birding trip leader and as a board member, and because of this I am acutely aware of the changes that have occurred among our birds and wildlife in the past many years.

The decline in numbers of raptors in my area (Exeter) over the past several years has been apparent. In my own backyard (which is a forested area), in years past, there would be several Barred Owls calling routinely every night through the winter and spring months. Now, I hear one occasionally. As I go around the state looking at birds, I see fewer and fewer Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, among others, compared to a few years ago. Notably, our Ospreys are doing very well – they eat fish, not the rodents that other hawks and owls normally eat. These other raptors are still around, in declining numbers, and we still have time to reverse the trend, but we must stop putting poison into their main food items!

A few years ago I had a "mouse problem" in my basement, and I called one of the local, well-known pest control companies. The fellow who came out to my house assured me that "we only use second generation rodenticides, which have no effect on birds that may eat the rodents." Subsequent research on my part revealed that this was simply not true...either he was misinformed, or he was lying in order to get my business. He also wanted to place bait stations around my house outside, presumably also poisoning local chipmunks and other rodents that weren't even coming inside...all to the demise of my local raptors.

We must control these poisons to avoid the secondary, devastating effects on nature's own "rodenticides" – the hawks and owls that historically have been the natural control on rodent populations. There are other ways to control rodents in the places where they are seriously impacting other human activities; we must move that way. Please support Bill 7783 to ban the second-generation anti-coagulant rodenticides across Rhode Island.

Thank you for your attention and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald Heitzmann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D' at the beginning.