

Testimony in support of House Bill 5704, House Committee on Municipal Government & Housing, March 11, 2025, by Peter Trafton, Providence Rhode Island

Dear Chair Casey and Honorable members of the House committee on Municipal Government and Housing, **I write with strong support for Representative Kislak's House Bill 5704.**

1st and 2nd generation anticoagulant rodenticides are like so-called “blood thinners” that block normal blood clotting mechanisms. In very controlled doses, these are valuable medicines in common use for humans with clotting disorders, or at risks thereof. When used as rat poisons, these anticoagulants accumulate in the bodies of rats and eventually kill them. When poisoned rats are attacked by birds of prey – raptors like hawks and owls – the birds themselves are poisoned and die a lingering death. This is not a desired consequence, but it is all too common, especially with unlimited application of these rat poisons. (Incidentally, dogs and children sometimes swallow these poisons if they are carelessly applied.)

5704 establishes significant restrictions on use of these poisons, limiting their use by the general public, requiring trained pest control experts, and specifying situations where such poisons may be required, and used safely.

Fortunately, alternative measures provide effective control of rodent pests in many typical situations. Referred to as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), these are effective and avoid the environmental impacts of anticoagulant rodenticides. 5704 promotes the use of IPM and provides opportunities for it to be practiced and studied in interested cities and towns.

As a member of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island and the Environment Council of Rhode Island, I write to urge passage of this important legislation, to ensure much safer and still effective control of rodent pests.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PG Trafton". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "Peter" being more legible than the last name "Trafton".

Peter Trafton, MD