

To the House Committee on Municipal Government & Housing,

My name is Scott Turner, and I am a resident of Providence. I write in support of Bill 5704 to create and support rodent integrated pest management pilot programs for municipalities.

Before moving to Rhode Island, I was a park ranger and parkland manager in New York City.

For the past 25 years, I've led nature walks in and around Providence. For 13 years I wrote a nature column in the *Providence Journal*. I make it a habit to walk in our capitol city almost every day.

Over the past three decades, I've watched rat-poison boxes, loaded with anti-coagulants, proliferate along the Moshassuck, Providence and Woonasquatuck rivers. I understand the need to control rodents. Indeed, I grew up in the South Bronx, where rodents were ubiquitous.

Earlier this winter, I found a dead mature Red-tailed hawk along the Moshassuck River. From the site, I spoke with a DEM biologist, describing the bird's shrunken look and blood-specked beak. Most likely, said the biologist, the bird died from the accumulated effects of anti-coagulant rat poisoning. He added that he was not surprised.

I contacted a friend, who joined me by the river. She covered the carcass in a thin cloth and carried it to a tree along the shoreline. There she laid the bird's remains to rest, covered by fallen leaves.

Rodents poisoned by anti-coagulants are easy pickings for raptors. When a hawk, owl, cat, or coyote eat a rodent that has ingested rat poison, the poison accumulates in the predator's body. This causes internal bleeding and potentially death.

Today, anticoagulant rodenticides are a common cause of poisoning in wildlife and pets. More and more, they also poison people.

Anti-coagulants are the "nuclear option" for controlling individual rodents. There are much safer and simpler Integrated Pest Management alternatives, such as prevention and mitigations steps, or sterilization products that reduce entire populations of rodents.

On our Providence block, a group of neighbors are focusing on prevention and mitigation to control rodents. Our steps include improving trash and compost containment and doing a better job of preventing rodents from accessing bird feeders and seed.

There are several regional efforts underway to restrict the use of anti-coagulants. I urge you to pass this legislation to join these efforts. Please stop the use of poisons that sicken and kill raptors and other animals. Please adopt safer methods to keep rodent populations in check.

Thank you for your time,

Scott Turner
112 Burlington Street
Providence, RI 02906