

RE: Support H 7222 – Rodenticide Ban and Municipal Pilot Program

Dear Representative Stephan Casey and Members of the House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing,

I am writing to urge you to support H-7222, a phased-in ban on certain anti-coagulant rodenticides that are harming Rhode Island's wildlife and ecosystems.

I grew up loving birds. My dad worked for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and from a young age I was taught how deeply interconnected our ecosystems are, how every living thing plays a role, and how fragile that balance can be. I learned to appreciate not just birds of prey like owls and hawks, but the entire web of life that supports them.

While I understand that rodents present real challenges in our communities, poisoning them is not a long-term solution. Anti-coagulant rodenticides do not stay contained. They move up the food chain. These poisons accumulate in predators like owls, hawks, and eagles, animals that are part of the natural solution to rodent control. One Eastern Screech Owl can consume hundreds, even up to 1,000 rodents per year. Yet it may only take one or two poisoned rodents to kill that owl.

Because these poisons take days to kill a rodent and weaken them in the process, they become easy prey. The more we poison rodents, the more we poison their predators, and in turn, we disrupt the very ecosystems that help keep rodent populations in balance. We are not just targeting one species, we are introducing toxins into an entire food web, including waterways and other wildlife.

First- and second-generation anti-coagulant rodenticides are unnecessary when safer and more effective alternatives exist. Other communities are implementing wildlife-safe rodent control strategies, including improved sanitation, exclusion methods, and fertility control programs.

House Bill 7222 offers a thoughtful, phased approach. It supports municipalities in developing safer rodent control alternatives without impacting the state budget, restricts consumer access to these harmful poisons, and implements a full ban by January 1, 2029, while still providing reasonable exemptions for agriculture, breweries, and declared public health crises.

This is a commonsense step forward. We can address rodent concerns without continuing to poison our raptors, waterways, and broader ecosystem. I respectfully urge you to support H-7222 and help protect Rhode Island's wildlife, environment, and future generations.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Woodard
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