



Audubon Society of Rhode Island

Re: Support for House Bill 7222 – An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Pesticide Control

Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island I am writing to express our resolute support for House Bill 7222.

Between our education efforts, membership, and supporters, we engage tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders each year. Between petitioners, online signees, postcards submissions, phone bankers and those willing to provide testimony in support of this bill, we have noted over 1500 community members in support of this bill. So, while I write in support of this legislation on behalf of Audubon Society of Rhode Island, it is equally a priority to Rhode Islanders.

This bill strategically phases in a ban on anticoagulant rodenticides, a class of poisons killing raptors, other wildlife, pets, poisoning children, threatening natural resources, and making rodent management worse.

These rat poisons are not proven to meaningfully reduce rat populations over time, but they have proven to kill the predators that have evolved to do so. Rodents undergo slow internal bleeding after ingesting these poisons, making themselves easy prey for predators such as raptors. When a bird of prey eats that rodent, they accumulate the poison until they die. Owls, hawks, eagles, and others are a part of the solution. One Eastern Screech Owl can eat up to 1,000 rodents a year but can die from just eating one to two poisoned rodents.

These rat poisons have been found to be polluting our water and have also been found throughout our ecosystems. I recently spoke to a lead gardener from a Providence community garden, and they are concerned over rodenticides being leached into their soils and produce.

The proposed Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program in H7222 provides a responsible, science-based alternative to the overreliance on rodenticides. By combining measures such as the encouragement of natural predators, rodent activity monitoring, and non-harmful rodent contraceptives, municipalities can deploy an effective, long-term approach to rodent control.

Audubon Society of Rhode Island strongly supports the pilot programs proposed in House Bill 7222 as a step in the right direction for sustainable rodent control and ecological health.

Sincerely,

Maxwell McFarland, Director of Advocacy

Connecting All People With Nature

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