

April 27, 2026

Dear Chairwoman Sosnowski and Members of the Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee,

My name is Kenda, and I live in Bristol. I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2795, the Rodenticide Ban and Municipal Pilot Program.

Anticoagulant rodenticides are intended to kill rats and mice, but they do not stay confined to those targets. These poisons move through the food chain, harming the very wildlife that naturally helps control rodent populations. When predators consume poisoned prey, they can suffer prolonged internal bleeding and slow, painful deaths.

Here in Rhode Island, we are fortunate to share our communities with remarkable raptors, including red-tailed hawks, barred owls, and the majestic Great horned owl. Great horned owls are powerful, apex predators and extraordinary rodent hunters. Because they feed on multiple rodents and other small mammals, they are especially vulnerable to secondary poisoning. These birds may not die immediately; instead, they can experience internal bleeding, weakness, and impaired hunting ability, sometimes leading to an agonizing starvation or fatal injuries.

I regularly hear great horned owls calling at night near my property. Their presence is a reminder that we still have healthy wildlife around us, even in developed areas. I hope they are safe, but knowing how widely these poisons are used, makes that hope uncertain. It's deeply troubling to think that the very animals helping to control rodents naturally could be suffering because of our reliance on anticoagulant rodenticides.

When we rely on first- and second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides, we undermine nature's own pest control system. We create a cycle in which the predators that would otherwise keep rodent populations in balance are themselves harmed or removed from the ecosystem. When those predators decline, the effects ripple outward, disrupting the natural balance of species and impacting the entire web of life that depends on a healthy, functioning ecosystem.

Other states, including California, have already taken action after research showed widespread rodenticide exposure in wildlife. Rhode Island has the opportunity to act responsibly and proactively.

The bill immediately establishes support for municipalities to develop wildlife-safe rodent control alternatives with no impact to the state budget. It then, with some exemptions, restricts the sale of these poisons away from consumer hands and bans them beginning January 1, 2029.

Passing Senate Bill 2795 would help prevent unnecessary suffering, protect raptors like the great horned owl, and support healthier ecosystems across our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Kenda Swartz
Bristol, Rhode Island