



September 11, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1788 (BLOOM) PESTICIDES: USE OF ANTICOAGULANTS– VETO REQUEST

Dear Governor Newsom:

The organizations above, request you veto AB 1788 (Bloom). AB 1788 will effectively ban all second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs). While it allows the Department of Pesticide Regulation (Department) to complete its re-evaluation, in order for the reevaluation to take effect, the Department of Fish and Wildlife must determine the use of SGARs is necessary to protect endangered species or their habitats. This requirement ignores the multiple and varied benefits of using SGARs to control invasive rodent populations, beyond protecting endangered species and their habitats.

We appreciate the author’s concerns with the impacts these products may have on non-target wildlife, however we question whether this ban will significantly protect wildlife, while it is likely to exacerbate public health risks and property damage. The wildlife impacts appear to be centered in one region, where a more targeted approach would likely prove more effective than a statewide ban with a patch work of exemptions. AB 1788 includes more than 15 exemptions to the SGARs ban, which clearly acknowledges the critical role SGARs play in effective rodent control strategies. The bill will allow for the continued use of SGARs in areas more likely to be located near nontarget wildlife than the urban housing, restaurant and retail zones which are now barred from using this class of rodenticides.

If signed into law, we believe the following concerns will need to be addressed in future legislation:

- Improved enforcement against illegal internet sales of SGAR containing products.
- Improved enforcement against illegal use of SGARs and other rodenticides already banned in CA which still appear in wildlife tested. For example, illegal rodenticides have been documented in illegal cannabis cultivation sites throughout the state, in wildlife habitats.
- The Public Health waiver process could vary widely from locality to locality, and legislation should provide consistency. For example, in the City of Los Angeles where a city employee

contracted typhus from exposure to rodents in the workplace, it would be up to the city's public health officer to determine if a public health emergency exists, in order for the city to use SGARs after other pest control methods failed. A declaration of this type would be extremely difficult to achieve leaving the health and safety of Californians at risk. If a local health agency failed to act, it is unclear if the state would be able to step-in.

- While government agency employees can use SGARs in some circumstances, it does not allow government agencies to contract professional pest control out to an authorized agent, which is currently a common practice.
- There is no consideration for what professional applicators should do with their SGARs products once the ban goes into effect.

PUBLIC HEALTH RISK

Rodenticides have been a critical tool for controlling rodent populations to protect Californians from the spread of disease and illness. Rodents can transmit more than 35 diseases to humans, including hantavirus, typhus, and the plague. Only last year, employees of the City of Los Angeles contracted typhus from rodent infestations in city buildings. "Flea-born typhus has become an increasing public health threat that **has the potential to affect all residents of Los Angeles County.**" – *Dr. Mantu Davis, Chief Health Officer, Los Angeles County*

This year, the Center for Disease Control is warning of unusual and aggressive rodent behavior because of the coronavirus pandemic which has severely reduced rodent food sources. According to pest control complaints, rats are venturing out during daytime hours and entering homes and businesses that had never previously experienced rodent activity, increasing human exposure. **This week alone, beaches in South Lake Tahoe were closed to visitors due to increased rodents carrying fleas infected with the plague.** Enclosed is a sampling of recent news articles highlighting the potential public health risks associated with increased rat infestation.

We believe all rodenticides, when used according to the labeled instructions, serve an important function protecting Californians from disease and property damage. Consumer and product safety are the top priority for our member companies. We understand and appreciate the intent of this bill but believe the Department and US EPA have the authority and the scientific expertise to restrict these products if they pose harm to wildlife, the environment or humans. This legislation would circumvent the scientific and research-based reevaluation process and ignores potential risks to human health or the environment from alternative pest control methods.

The amendments to AB 1788 this year represent significant policy changes which never went through a policy committee for analysis and debate. We believe there are valid concerns which should be resolved as part of a new bill next year. For more information, please contact Nicole Quinonez representing the Household and Commercial Products Association at 916-200-6746 or nicole@mqadvocacy.com, or a representative from any of the organizations listed below.

OPPOSED

American Chemistry Council
Animal and Insect Pest Management, Inc.
Animal Pest Management Services, Inc.

California Apartment Association
California Chamber of Commerce
California Landscape Contractors Association
California Manufacturers and Technology Association
California Retailers Association
California Restaurant Association
California Waterfowl
Household & Commercial Products Association
National Federation of Independent Business
National Pest Management Association
RISE
Syngenta
Western Plant Health Association

cc: Assembly Member Bloom
Rachel Wagoner, Office of Governor Newsom
Julissa de Gonzalez, Department of Pesticide Regulation
Monica Wagoner, Department of Public Health

Sincerely,



James Darr, State Government Affairs Director
Household & Commercial Products Association



Dan Fox, President/Urban Wildlife Biologist
Animal Pest Management Services, Inc.



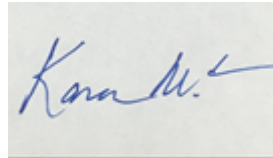
Renee Pinel, President/CEO
Western Plant Health Association



Shawn Lewis, Policy Director
National Federation of Independent Business



Valerie Nera, Policy Advocate
California Chamber of Commerce



Karen Reardon, Vice President of Public Affairs
Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment



Tim Shestek, Senior Director, State Affairs
American Chemistry Council



Ben Sacher, State Affairs Manager
Syngenta



Dawn Koepke
California Manufacturers & Technology Association



Rachel Michelin, President
California Retailers Association



Andrew Architect, Chief of Staff
National Pest Management Association



Debra Carlton, Senior Vice President
California Apartment Association



Mark Hennelly
Vice President, Legislative Affairs and Public Policy
California Waterfowl



Sandra Giarde, CAE
Executive Director
California Landscape Contractors Association



Margaret Townsend
President / Biologist
Animal & Insect Pest Management, Inc.