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March 29, 2019

Statement in Support of AB 1788 (California Ecosystems Protection Act)

Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee:

The River Otter Ecology Project writes in support of AB 1788, introduced by Assemblymember Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica). The bill would ban second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) in California—the most toxic, “one-feeding kills” poisons—as well as first generation anticoagulants (FGARs) on state-owned properties. These products are having widespread impacts on our state’s ecosystems, in particular, California’s treasured wildlife, as well as creating unnecessary risk to the health and safety of our state’s children and household pets.

River Otters (*Lontra canadensis*) are apex predators that prey on a wide array of species, including rodents, birds, fishes and crabs. They are important indicators of ecosystem health. They are also a recovering species in the San Francisco Bay Area and southward, and we are particularly interested in health issues that may cause illness and mortality. In partnership with CDFW, found/reported river otter carcasses are collected and necropsied. During 2018, necropsy on two otters hit by cars indicated traces of anticoagulant rodenticides. This leads to questions about how the otters ingested rodenticides and underlines the fact that AR rodenticide contact is nearly universal in wildlife.

“AR baits are palatable to and can be taken by species such as crabs and may also be transported through run-off into coastal waters where fragments are ingested by various marine species (Masuda et al. 2015; Pain et al. 2000 ; Pitt et al. 2015). [Anticoagulant Rodenticides and Wildlife, van den Brink et al., Springer International Publishing, 2018]

Based on CDFW studies, from 2014 to 2018, an estimated **70 to 90%** of various tested wildlife species in the state were found to have SGARs in their systems. Simply put, the evidence shows that a consumer ban on SGARs alone is insufficient to protect California’s ecosystems and further steps must be taken. AB 1788 would ensure that use of these harmful toxins are prohibited full-stop in the State of California, while still leaving licensed applicators and consumers with ample tools to address rodent infestations.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Megan Isadore".

Megan Isadore,
Executive Director