



Friends of Griffith Park

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friendsofgriffithpark.org

August 6, 2020

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Senate Appropriations Committee
California State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1788 – California Ecosystems Protection Act – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Portantino and Honorable Committee members,

Friends of Griffith Park requests your YES vote for AB 1788 at the upcoming Appropriations Committee hearing. As advocates for urban wildlife and Griffith Park, one of the largest natural parks in the country, we have seen firsthand the toll anticoagulants have taken on non-targeted species. The enactment of a moratorium on second generation anticoagulants is an important step in acknowledging the importance of the entire State's rich biodiversity currently at risk with the widespread use of these agents.

Friends of Griffith Park has funded many toxicology tests on dead animals from the area, with most results returned as positive for second generation anticoagulants. As recently as July, a necropsy and lab analysis conclusively found a great horned owl died near Griffith Park of one of these agents.

While second generation agents have been removed from public store shelves (2014), there is no logical reason why pest control companies should continue to use them, except in very special, approved situations (per the legislation). Furthermore, the action in 2014 has not slowed the rate of wildlife poisoning from these products since that time. In fact, in recent studies reviewed by California Department of Fish and Wildlife, between 70 to 90% of tested wildlife were found to have SGARs in their systems.

Besides unintentional lethal poisoning, there is evidence of compromised and disrupted immune systems in exposed wildlife, making them more susceptible to disease. Further, studies have confirmed gene expression changes in bobcats, the same kind of genetic change which caused the mild anticoagulant, warfarin, to become less effective as a rodenticide in earlier decades!

There is little doubt Griffith Park wildlife is adversely affected by the unnecessary use of rodenticides. One of the most graphic examples is that of Griffith Park mountain lion P-22, who luckily survived after being treated for anticoagulant poisoning in 2014. P-22's mange symptom was spotted in wildlife camera photos, and NPS quickly recaptured and successfully treated him.

Of collared mountain lions studied by NPS in the Santa Monica Mountains, two dead were confirmed of anticoagulant poisoning, plus one probable, just during 2019!

Confirmed mountain lion deaths NPS Santa Monica Study: P-30, P-47, P-34, P-3, P-4
Probable mountain lion deaths NPS Santa Monica Study: P-53, P-55, P-41, P-25

In addition to wildlife, rodenticides leave pets at unreasonable risk for poisoning and death. Children also are regularly exposed to anticoagulants and require treatment. Compounding risks to children and pets, we see no universal enforcement of bait box labeling and tethering regulations by the pest control companies, in either park or residential settings.

AB 1788 sets down strong control of second generation agents, but provides critical exceptions. The use of anticoagulants unintentionally kills our natural predators whose population and breeding dynamics are hugely different than rodents. We are now on the brink of finally learning that the balance of nature is being thrown off with the use of anticoagulants, and ironically this loss of natural predators may be causing even more troublesome rodent issues.

Friends of Griffith Park strongly urges your approval of the California Ecosystems Protection Act to reduce non-target lethal and non-lethal toxicity of wildlife. AB 1788 also protects entire ecosystems.

Thank you for taking action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerry H.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerry Hans
President

cc: Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Assemblymember Richard Bloom

About Friends of Griffith Park:

Friends of Griffith Park (FoGP) is a California non-profit 501(c) (3) dedicated to preserving and protecting Griffith Park's natural habitat, biodiversity, and historic features, for current and future generations. FoGP is committed to ensuring that Griffith Park, a public park and Los Angeles' largest Historic-Cultural Monument, remain open, natural, and free to all citizens of Los Angeles.