



November 8, 2025

Dear Dir. Karen Morrison and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation,

Project Coyote appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Department of Pesticide Regulation's proposed anticoagulant rodenticide (AR) mitigation measures. We have been deeply engaged in California's efforts to protect wildlife from these deadly poisons, and we recognize the complexity of balancing public health needs with wildlife protection. We thank DPR for its work developing and implementing what are currently the strongest anticoagulant rodenticide rules in the nation.

Project Coyote and our nearly 6,000 California members are concerned that the proposed regulations represent a significant weakening of the legislative intent behind AB 1788 (2020), AB 1322 (2023), and AB 2552 (2024)—collectively known as the Poison Free Wildlife Act—by expanding locations where anticoagulant rodenticides can be used and allowing for unnecessarily long durations of use.

If adopted as proposed, the expansion of allowed use sites, permission for up to 105 days of annual AR applications, weak agricultural exemptions, and lack of meaningful IPM implementation requirements could result in persistently high (or even increasing) exposure of wildlife to ARs.

Business Exemptions vs. Residential Prohibitions

Current law prohibits residential AR use because of the attraction of rodents to continually present food in homes, children and pets can face exposure risks, and residential users often lack the expertise to deploy poisons safely. These factors make it necessary for residents to instead employ more effective, longer-term strategies (e.g., exclusion and sanitation) or use legally approved non-anticoagulant rodenticides only.

Yet the proposed regulations would allow the use of ARs at other locations where food is continually present: allowances of these poisons in grocery stores, restaurants, and food processing facilities. DPR has not demonstrated in the proposed regulations the scientific or public health rationale for this distinction. As a result, DPR appears to simply be prioritizing the convenience of businesses over public and environmental safety. **If residents are required to manage rodents through behavior and structural remedies, not the rampant use of ARs, then well-resourced commercial operations with safety inspection and maintenance budgets should also be required to do so.**



The Regulations Require Integrated and Sustainable Pest Management Planning But Not Proven Implementation

Proposed § 6471.5(b)(4) states that applicators "must follow relevant components of the General Rodent Management Plan when making decisions to apply anticoagulant rodenticides." This language is profoundly weak—it requires consideration of elements in Integrated and Sustainable Pest Management plans, but not a guarantee that they have been fully implemented. For example, an applicator could review their plan, decide that exclusion and sanitation are too expensive or not "relevant" to a specific situation, and proceed to the use of ARs instead.

We recommend that DPR change the language of § 6471.5(b)(4) to stipulate that pest control businesses and applicators must fully implement all relevant components of their General Rodent Management Plan before AR use is permitted, and demonstrate the timing of the implementation. This requirement could be fulfilled through written documentation that a site inspection has been conducted; feasible exclusion measures have been implemented including sealing entry points; sanitation improvements have eliminated accessible food and water; mechanical trapping has been deployed for at least 14 days; and non-chemical methods have proven insufficient to reduce rodent populations below management thresholds. An exception could be provided for genuine public health emergencies declared under § 6471(d)(3).

The Least Number of AR Applications Should be Required

As noted above, we object to the allowance in the proposed regulations of a cumulative 105 days annually of AR application, representing three 35 day applications. In its public presentation on the proposed regulations, DPR itself stated, "Studies have shown a 70% reduction in rodent populations in 35 days." **We ask that DPR clarify the scientific basis for allowing three annual applications and recommend that § 6471(c) be revised to remove the 105-day allowance.**

Responses to DPR's Specific Questions

Does the rulemaking capture the intent? Only in part. As discussed above, by allowing the use of ARs at additional sites where food sources are continually present, the expansion of use sites, 105-day annual application allowance, and lack of clear Integrated and Sustainable Pest Management implementation requirements contradict the intent of the Poison Free Wildlife Act to vastly reduce the presence and risks of ARs throughout the environment.

Refinements to exempted sites? Yes—do not include grocery stores, restaurants, and most commercial food facilities from the list of allowed uses around man-made structures in §6471(a). Allowed uses should be reserved for genuine public health priorities: hospitals, clinics, pharmacies,



and biologics storage. Agricultural exemptions should be tied to requirements for County Agricultural Commissioner permits and use of Integrated and Sustainable Pest Management practices, as well as a prohibition of ARs near sensitive habitats.

Training topics? The proposed topics are appropriate but incomplete. Add: (1) how to actually implement the Integrated and Sustainable Pest Management hierarchy with case studies, (2) wildlife mortality recognition and mandatory reporting requirements, (3) legal requirements and penalties under CESA and Fish & Game Code, and (4) environmental justice considerations. Expand the non-target effects module with California-specific data showing 72% wildlife exposure.

Central recordkeeping location? Inadequate for enforcement. Records should be available on-site or electronically accessible within 24 hours so inspectors can verify compliance during site visits. Require standardized formats and add annual aggregate reporting to DPR to track whether regulations reduce use and wildlife exposure. Increase the record retention requirement to five years, which will allow DPR (and potentially the public) to more accurately evaluate the effectiveness of the training and subsequent applicator practices over time.

12-month implementation delay? Reduce to 6 months to more effectively rein in wildlife deaths and the presence of dangerous poisons in the environment. Six months is adequate for DPR to approve curriculum and for the workforce to complete training, especially with online options.

Training implementation? Use a hybrid approach: DPR develops standardized core curriculum, then approves independent third-party providers to deliver it. This ensures quality while maximizing accessibility. The training must count toward Continuing Education credits for DPR and Structural Pest Control Board licensure to remove compliance barriers and signal that sustainable rodent management is core professional competency.

To date, California has led the nation in demonstrating that effective rodent management and wildlife protection are compatible. We urge DPR to maintain this bold position by strengthening the proposed regulations so that they reflect the original intent of the Poison Free Wildlife Act and state legislature, before moving forward with formal rulemaking. **Thank you for your time and attention.**

Respectfully submitted,

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