

Assembly Bill No. 1788

CHAPTER 250

An act to amend Section 12978.7 of the Food and Agricultural Code, relating to pesticides.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 2020. Filed with
Secretary of State September 29, 2020.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1788, Bloom. Pesticides: use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides.

Existing law regulates the use of pesticides and authorizes the Director of Pesticide Regulation to adopt regulations to govern the possession, sale, or use of any pesticide, as prescribed. Existing law prohibits the use of any pesticide that contains one or more of specified anticoagulants in wildlife habitat areas, as defined. Existing law exempts from this prohibition the use of these pesticides for agricultural activities, as defined. Existing law requires the director, and each county agricultural commissioner under the direction and supervision of the director, to enforce the provisions regulating the use of pesticides. A violation of these provisions is a misdemeanor.

This bill, the California Ecosystems Protection Act of 2020, would additionally prohibit the use of any second generation anticoagulant rodenticide, as defined, in this state until the director certifies to the Secretary of State that, among other things, the Department of Pesticide Regulation has completed a reevaluation of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides and the Department of Pesticide Regulation, in consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, has adopted any additional restrictions necessary to ensure that continued use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides is not reasonably expected to result in significant adverse effects to nontarget wildlife, as provided. The bill would expand the exemption for agricultural activities to include activities conducted in certain locations. The bill would also exempt from its provisions the use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides in certain locations and under specified conditions, including use by any governmental agency employee for public health activities, use by a mosquito or vector control district to protect the public health, use for the eradication of nonnative invasive species inhabiting or found to be present on offshore islands in a manner that is consistent with all otherwise applicable federal and state laws and regulations, use to control an actual or potential rodent infestation associated with a public health need, and use for research purposes related to the above-described reevaluation.

By imposing additional duties on county agricultural commissioners, and expanding the definition of a crime, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that with regard to certain mandates no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

With regard to any other mandates, this bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs so mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) Wildlife, including birds of prey, mountain lions, bobcats, fishers, foxes, coyotes, and endangered species such as the northern spotted owl, pacific fisher, and San Joaquin kit fox, are an irreplaceable part of California's natural ecosystems. As predators of small mammals, they play an important role in regulating and controlling the population of rodents throughout the state to improve public health and welfare.

(2) Millions of people annually visit California for the purposes of viewing and photographing wildlife, and these visits contribute millions of dollars to California's economy.

(3) Urban areas are increasingly being used by predatory mammals and birds of prey and the public enjoys seeing them and values these animals and the ecosystem services they provide.

(4) The ecosystem services provided by native wildlife predators are a public trust, just like clean air and water. We, as California residents, are obligated to conserve these wildlife populations for future generations of Californians.

(5) Scientific research and state studies have found rodenticides in over 75 percent of animals tested. These rodenticides lead to direct mortality and chronic long-term health impacts for natural predators, nontarget organisms, and endangered species and further steps are needed to reduce rodenticide exposure in nontarget animals.

(6) While all anticoagulant rodenticides have a harmful impact on nontarget animals, second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) are particularly dangerous to nontarget wildlife as SGARs are higher potency than prior generations and a single dose has a half-life of more than 100 days in a rodent's liver. Due to high toxicity and concern for impact on nontarget wildlife, the Department of Pesticide Regulation banned consumer sales and use of SGARs in 2014, restricting their purchase and use to certified pesticide applicators.

(7) Despite the 2014 regulations issued by the Department of Pesticide Regulation, scientific research and state studies have found no significant reduction in the number of nontarget wildlife with detectable levels of SGARs in their system. From 2014 through 2018, the Department of Fish

and Wildlife found SGARs in more than 90 percent of tested mountain lions, 88 percent of tested bobcats, 85 percent of protected Pacific fishers tested, and 70 percent of northern spotted owls tested. Such data indicates that a consumer sales and use ban of SGARs has been insufficient to reduce rodenticide exposure in nontarget animals and further steps must be taken.

(8) Rodenticides can be counterproductive to rodent control by poisoning, harming, and killing natural predators that help regulate rodent populations throughout California.

(9) The use of pesticides and rodenticides to reduce or eliminate nonnative invasive species inhabiting or found to be present on offshore islands is critically important for the environmental and ecosystem health of these islands, and for allowing federally and state-listed endangered and threatened species, including species presumed extinct or on the verge of extinction, to recover and propagate back to population levels that existed before the presence of these nonnative invasive species and for avoiding federal or state listing of native and endemic species due to their displacement by nonnative invasive species.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this act to ensure that aquatic, terrestrial, and avian wildlife species remain a fully functional component of the ecosystems they inhabit and move through in California.

(c) This act shall be known, and may be cited, as the California Ecosystems Protection Act of 2020.

SEC. 2. Section 12978.7 of the Food and Agricultural Code is amended to read:

12978.7. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) “Second generation anticoagulant rodenticide” means any pesticide product containing any of the following active ingredients:

(A) Brodifacoum.

(B) Bromadiolone.

(C) Difenacoum.

(D) Difethialone.

(2) “Wildlife habitat area” means any state park, state wildlife refuge, or state conservancy.

(b) Except as provided in subdivision (e), and notwithstanding subdivision (c), the use of any second generation anticoagulant rodenticide is prohibited in a wildlife habitat area.

(c) Except as provided in subdivision (e) or (f), the use of any second generation anticoagulant rodenticide is prohibited in this state until the director makes the certification described in subdivision (g).

(d) State agencies are directed to encourage federal agencies to comply with subdivisions (b) and (c).

(e) This section does not apply to any of the following:

(1) The use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides by any governmental agency employee who complies with Section 106925 of the Health and Safety Code, who uses second generation anticoagulant rodenticides for public health activities.

(2) The use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides otherwise prohibited by this section when used by any governmental agency employee for the purposes of protecting water supply infrastructure and facilities in a manner that is consistent with all otherwise applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

(3) The use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides by a mosquito or vector control district formed under Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 2000) of Division 3 or Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 2800) of Division 3 of the Health and Safety Code to protect the public health.

(4) The use of any second generation anticoagulant rodenticides for the eradication of nonnative invasive species inhabiting or found to be present on offshore islands in a manner that is consistent with all otherwise applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

(5) The use of any department-registered second generation anticoagulant rodenticide to control an actual or potential rodent infestation associated with a public health need, as determined by a supporting declaration from the State Public Health Officer or a local public health officer. For purposes of this section, a public health need is an urgent, nonroutine situation posing a significant risk to human health in which it is documented that other rodent control alternatives, including nonchemical alternatives, are inadequate to control the rodent infestation.

(6) The use of any department-registered second generation anticoagulant rodenticide for research purposes related to the reevaluation described in paragraph (1) of subdivision (g). Before using a department-registered second generation anticoagulant in the manner described in this paragraph, a written authorization for research shall be obtained from the director. The director may specify the conditions in the authorization for research under which the research shall be conducted. The director may terminate, amend, or refuse to issue an authorization for research if the director determines any of the following:

(A) The research may involve a hazard to the environment.

(B) The research may be used for purposes unrelated to pesticide data development.

(C) A violation of the authorization for research, prior authorization for research, or Division 6 (commencing with Section 11401) or this division, or a regulation adopted pursuant to either or both of those divisions, has occurred in connection with the research.

(f) (1) This section does not apply to the use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides in either of the following locations:

(A) A medical waste generator, as defined in Section 117705 of the Health and Safety Code.

(B) A facility registered annually and subject to inspection under Section 510 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. Sec. 360 et seq.) and compliant with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. Sec. 135 et seq.).

(2) This section does not apply to the use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides for agricultural activities, as defined in Section 564.

(3) For purposes of paragraph (2), “agricultural activities” include activities conducted in any of the following locations:

(A) A warehouse used to store foods for human or animal consumption.

(B) An agricultural food production site, including, but not limited to, a slaughterhouse or cannery.

(C) A factory, brewery, or winery.

(D) An agricultural production site housing water storage and conveyance facilities.

(E) An agricultural production site housing rights-of-way and other transportation infrastructure.

(g) After the director determines that all of the following conditions have occurred, the director shall certify to the Secretary of State of that determination:

(1) The department has completed the reevaluation of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides, as commenced by the department on March 12, 2019, pursuant to California Notice 2019-03 “(Notice of Final Decision to Begin Reevaluation of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides).”

(2) Consistent with the requirements of this division and regulations adopted pursuant to this division, the department has adopted any additional restrictions necessary to ensure that continued use of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides is not reasonably expected to result in significant adverse effects to nontarget wildlife and those restrictions are operative. Any restrictions described in this paragraph shall be developed in consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

(3) The Department of Fish and Wildlife determines that control or eradication of invasive rodent populations is necessary for the protection of threatened or endangered species or their habitats and requires the use of a second generation anticoagulant rodenticide.

SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution for certain costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district because, in that regard, this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

However, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains other costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.