



The Corporation of the District of Saanich | Mayor's Office
770 Vernon Avenue Victoria BC V8X 2W7 | T 250-475-5510 | F 250-475-5440 | www.saanich.ca

July 22, 2020

VIA EMAIL: premier@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable John Horgan
Office of the Premier
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier:

Re: Ban of Anticoagulant Rodenticides

Saanich Council formally requests the Province to ban the use of anticoagulant rodenticides throughout British Columbia. It has been well-documented for over a decade that anticoagulant rodenticide (rat poison) products poison non-target wildlife in large numbers. Examples include owls, hawks, small birds, earthworms, coyotes and even cougars. They also pose a risk for pets and children to be poisoned.

Saanich Council at their meeting of July 13, 2020 resolved as follows:

“That Council:

- 1. Provide direction to staff to implement a ban of anticoagulant rodenticides on all District of Saanich properties and in all District of Saanich facilities and lands;***
- 2. Request that the Mayor write, on behalf of Council, to the Premier of British Columbia, appropriate Ministers, copying Members of the Legislative Assembly in the Capital Region, requesting that the Province of British Columbia ban anticoagulant rodenticides;***
- 3. Direct staff to communicate to residents and businesses in the District of Saanich, Council's direction on this matter, the harmful impacts of anticoagulant rodenticides, and better alternatives that are available; and***
- 4. Share this report with all other local governments.”***

A copy of the July 13, 2020 Saanich Council minutes and Report to Council dated July 3, 2020 are attached for additional information.

If there are any comments or questions I can be reached by phone: (250) 475-5510 or by email: mayor@saanich.ca.

Sincerely,



Fred Haynes
Mayor

Enc.

c. Saanich Council
CRD Region MLAs

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Chambers: "That Bylaw No. 9607 be now passed."

Council discussion ensued with the following comments:

- The bylaw will be considered as part of the Housing Strategy process and could be amended in the future if needed.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL

1410-04

Notice of Motion

ANTICOAGULANT RODENTICIDES IN THE DISTRICT OF SAANICH

Notice of Motion Report of Councillor Taylor and Councillor Plant dated July 3, 2020 recommending that Council:

1. Provide direction to staff to implement a ban of anticoagulant rodenticides in the District of Saanich
2. Request that the Mayor write, on behalf of Council, to the Premier of British Columbia, appropriate Ministers, copying MLAs in the Capital Region, requesting that the Province of British Columbia ban anticoagulant rodenticides.
3. Direct staff to communicate to residents and businesses in the District of Saanich, Council's direction on this matter, the harmful impacts of anticoagulant rodenticides, and better alternatives that are available.
4. Share this report with all other local governments in the Province of British Columbia.

MOVED by Councillor Taylor and Seconded by Councillor Plant: "That Council:

1. **Provide direction to staff to implement a ban of anticoagulant rodenticides on all District of Saanich properties and in all District of Saanich facilities and lands;**
2. **Request that the Mayor write, on behalf of Council, to the Premier of British Columbia, appropriate Ministers, copying Members of the Legislative Assembly in the Capital Region, requesting that the Province of British Columbia ban anticoagulant rodenticides;**
3. **Direct staff to communicate to residents and businesses in the District of Saanich, Council's direction on this matter, the harmful impacts of anticoagulant rodenticides, and better alternatives that are available; and**
4. **Share this report with all other local governments in the Province of British Columbia."**

Council discussion ensued with the following comments:

- It is appropriate to cease using rodenticides on Saanich properties.
- There are a wide range of harmful impacts to non-targeted species and natural predators such as owls and domestic pets.
- Rodenticides are counterproductive to rodent control.
- There are more effective, less harmful alternatives that are available.
- Residents need to be educated on how to rodent-proof their properties.

In response to questions from Council, the CAO stated:

- Currently, there is no bylaw in Saanich banning anticoagulant rodenticides.
- Saanich contracts out rodent control for municipality properties; there may be costs associated in changing the method of rodent control.

In response to questions from Council, the Director of Planning stated:

- The Province sets what municipalities can regulate in regard to anticoagulant rodenticides; at this point, municipalities do not have the authority to ban anticoagulant rodenticides outside of Saanich owned Lands and Facilities.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

REPORTS FROM DIRECTORS

1970-30
Annual Reports

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Presentation of the 2019 Annual Report to Council.

The CAO presented the 2019 Draft Annual Report (PowerPoint on file).

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Chambers: "That the 2019 Annual Report be received for information with thanks."

CARRIED

5400-30
Debt Financing

DEBT FINANCING

Report of the Director of Finance dated July 3, 2020 recommending that Council receive for information the report on the current use of debt servicing at Saanich, the long term strategy in place for future use of debt servicing and the implications of borrowing an additional \$2,000,000 annually to accelerate the Active Transportation Plan.

The Director of Finance presented Debt Financing (PowerPoint on file) and answered questions from Council:

- A referendum may be required if Saanich moves above the defined level of borrowing.

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Taylor: "That the report of the Director of Finance dated July 3, 2020 with respect to Debt Financing be received for information."

Council discussion ensued with the following comments:

- Long term borrowing can be considered to mitigate increases to taxation.

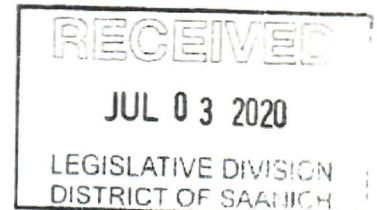
In response to questions from Council, the Director of Finance stated:

- Saanich has historically been financially conservative.
- The approval process is part of the Loan Authorization Bylaw; when the funding for the project has been established and it is determined how much borrowing is needed, approval from electors would be required.
- There are many variables in projecting long term costs.
- Council could provide direction on the preferred use of debt and the approach it wishes to take and staff would provide more information in the Budget Guidelines report.



Notice of Motion

To: Mayor and Council
From: Councillor Ned Taylor, Councillor Colin Plant
Date: July 3, 2020
Subject: Anticoagulant Rodenticides in the District of Saanich



RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council provide direction to staff to implement a ban of anticoagulant rodenticides in the District of Saanich.
2. That Council request that the Mayor write, on behalf of council, to the Premier of British Columbia, appropriate ministers, copying MLAs in the Capital Region, requesting that the Province of British Columbia ban anticoagulant rodenticides.
3. That Council direct staff to communicate to residents and businesses in the District of Saanich council's direction on this matter, the harmful impacts of anticoagulant rodenticides, and better alternatives that are available.
4. That Council share this report with all other local governments in the Province of British Columbia.

BACKGROUND

What are anticoagulant rodenticides?

Often referred to as "rat poison", anticoagulant rodenticides are used for rodent control. They are intended to kill rodent pests, such as rats and mice. Once consumed, they cause death through internal bleeding.

What are the harmful impacts of anticoagulant rodenticides?

It has been well-documented for over a decade that these products poison non-target wildlife on all levels of the food chain, in large numbers. Examples include owls, hawks, small birds, earthworms, coyotes, and even cougars. It is not uncommon for pets and children to be poisoned as well.

Non-target species can be impacted by direct (primary) and indirect (secondary) poisoning:

- Primary poisoning: anticoagulant rodenticides are provided in a small box. Rats feed on bait blocks containing the poison inside these boxes. Any animal the same size or smaller than a rat, can directly access the poison in this same manner. Many non-target species such as small birds are directly poisoned and killed in this way.
- Secondary poisoning: even if it is only small animals that can consume the poison directly, impacts on other wildlife are wide-ranging. Once a rat or other small non-target animal consumes a lethal dose of the poison, they don't die immediately. In fact, they can continue to live for several days. During this time they will continue to feed on the poison (mistaking it to be a food source), which increases the overall toxicity within their bodies. They will become slower and more vulnerable to predators. They make for an easy meal for predators such as owls - this is how secondary poisoning can occur.

Death from both primary and secondary poisoning is slow and painful for all animals.

Owls, for example, are not only a treasured species in our community, they are in fact natural predators to rats and other rodents. A single owl eats around 3 rats per night, approximately 1000 per year. By allowing the use of anticoagulant rodenticides to control rats, we are killing off their natural predators through secondary poisoning and helping the rat population to grow overall. It is entirely counter-productive.

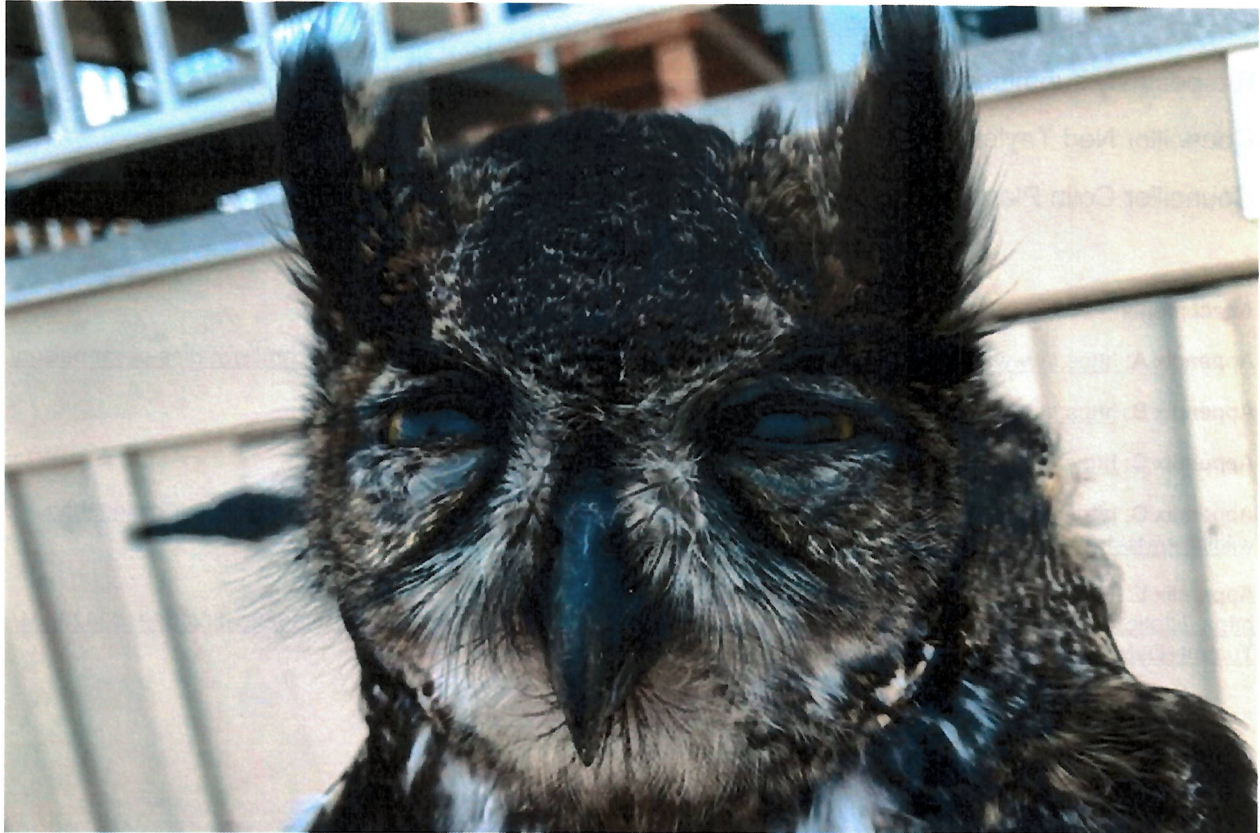
What are others saying?

On February 28, 2020, the BC SPCA released a news story on their website, outlining the harmful impacts of anticoagulant rodenticides, and encouraging their readers to “push our municipalities in the right direction to reduce the use of rodenticides in parks and near greenbelts and areas that are home to B.C. wildlife”. This can be found in its entirety in Appendix B of this report.

Marie Turcott, a UBC law Student has researched this topic and written a fulsome report on the harmful impacts of anticoagulant rodenticides and critique of the provincial and federal government's current approach to regulating these products. It can be found in Appendix E of this report.

Why Saanich, why now?

In recent weeks, there have been specific instances of owls dying due to anticoagulant rodenticides in the District of Saanich. On May 29, 2020, the Saanich News published an article (Attached as Appendix A): “Saanich residents sound alarm after second owl dies of rat poison”.



A Great Horned Owl, found dead in the Saanich-owned property on Kings Rd, was killed by anticoagulant rodenticides just a number of weeks ago.

(Picture courtesy of Robert Vanzella)

On June 15, 2020, the District of North Vancouver Council voted unanimously to ban the use of anticoagulant rodenticides (see Appendix C & D).

Momentum is building to stop using this harmful, unnecessary and ineffective method of rodent control. There are specific instances in the District of Saanich, which have highlighted its harmful impacts.

CONCLUSION

Anticoagulant rodenticides are a harmful and ineffective method of rodent control, which kill a wide range of other valuable wildlife in our community, including the very species that naturally hunt and control the rodent population. Continuing to allow this method of rodent control is entirely illogical. There are more effective, less harmful and less cruel alternatives that exist.

Respectfully submitted by,

Councillor Ned Taylor

Councillor Colin Plant

Attachments

Appendix A: <https://www.saanichnews.com/news/saanich-residents-sound-alarm-after-second-owl-dies-of-rat-poison/>

Appendix B: <https://spca.bc.ca/news/rat-poison-wildlife/>

Appendix C: <https://app.dnv.org/OpenDocument/Default.aspx?docNum=4399436>

Appendix D: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/rat-poison-rodenticide-north-vancouver-district-ban-wildlife-owls-1.5611892>

Appendix E:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a766a60bce176c268d99786/t/5ec70e48e553460f8682ce60/1590103627704/Turcott+Defending+Nature+Against+Rodenticides.pdf>