



Adam Lid <adam.lid@lacity.org>

PUBLIC COMMENT COUNCIL FILE 13-1580

1 message

Debbie Donahue <donahue@nceas.ucsb.edu>

Mon, Apr 28, 2014 at 10:45 AM

To: Adam.Lid@lacity.org

My colleague, Nancy Baron, recently shared her thoughts on the issue of rat poison. She expressed, more eloquently than I could, why this is such a critical issue, so I am providing her piece below. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Debbie Donahue

By Nancy Baron:

On today's front page of the Los Angeles Times is a heartbreaking story of a mountain lion known as P-22 who just a few months ago was a beautiful healthy creature living his life on the outskirts of Los Angeles. Today as the before and after photos show, he is sick with mange from rat poison, which is in the animals he captures and eats. It is a powerful story and I urge you to please read it.

<http://lati.ms/vUwvf>

The article is about how rat poison is linked to disease and death due to the concentration and magnification of poison as it climbs up the food chain. Many bobcats, foxes and coyotes, not to mention owls and hawks are sickened and die an agonizing death due to eating poisoned rats (and other animals). It is a slow and inhumane death. And these toxins are increasingly pervasive.

The sad thing is, this is going on in our own back yards here on the Mesa. This is evidenced in the animals I and others have found dead or dying as we do our daily walks or prowl in our gardens.

We live in Paradise as we all know --and as we so often say to each other. But the use of rat poison on the Mesa is killing our wildlife neighbors, the very coyotes, hawks and owls that would keep the numbers of rats down naturally if they were healthy and able to survive.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words so rather than go on and on, I share with you a photo taken in my husband Ken's and my back yard of a coyote with mange due to rat poison. This poor desperate animal came to the water bucket that we keep in the yard to help animals in this time of drought.

We are killing the natural rat controllers who eat the rats --which only leads to more rats and the need for more and more poison. Its a vicious losing battle and we would be far better to use clean forms of traps (rat zappers) and most importantly to create conditions so that the natural controls — the predators of rats — can keep them in check. This year we have a nesting pair barn owls in an owl box. Two years ago they didn't make it as they before they could raise their young. We later found the young chicks in the nest. Last

year, luckily, the pair successfully raised 4 young. When we cleaned out the box after they all fledged and left there were literally hundreds of rat skeletons in the owl pellets inside. This year we are crossing our fingers that the owls survive again.

Barn owls are having a lot of problems with poison. Our neighbor Robert Abbott who is an organic farmer (thank you Robert) told me that last June at his dad's there was a big die off of barn owls in June — in a short period of a few weeks they found around 15 dead owls. Being organic farmers they have a lot of owl boxes and perches and use the barn owls as natural rat controllers. But someone in the area must have done a massive poisoning and it got the owls too. This is conjecture but the most likely explanation.

I honestly think most people really aren't aware of how we are poisoning our environment with all the chemicals we use. Ultimately - we will get the blow back with cancer and other illnesses. There are many, many reasons to find alternatives to using poisons in our homes and environments. I wish I had everyone on the Mesa's email but I don't so I would be grateful if you could please spread the word to our other neighbors that using rat poison is not only inhumane, but it makes no sense.

The bottom line, from my own point of view, is that our life is immeasurably enriched by the nature that surrounds us, and we should take care of our animal neighbors too, even as we do each other by sharing the bounty of our gardens and our friendly exchanges as we revel in the beauty of our Shepard's Mesa. I hope you will join Ken and I in our desire and efforts to keep the Mesa free of rat poison.

--

Debbie Donahue
Program Data Manager
National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis
University of California, Santa Barbara
(805) 892-2534, donahue@nceas.ucsb.edu