



Starling

March 6, 2025

To the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry:

Testimony in support of L.D. 356

My husband, Jim, was hoping to join me today but he was recently released from the hospital and is not well enough to travel.

I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Plant and Soil Sciences from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. I have managed greenhouses and I worked for the Waltham Extension Service so I know firsthand how valuable pesticides are in safeguarding our food, structures, and preventing disease.

At the same time however, I think that it is important that people are notified of rodenticides that can make sick and or kill pets which is what L.D. 356 aims to do.

In the case of our dog Starling, while we cannot prove that her liver and pancreas damage was caused by our neighbor's rodenticide, circumstances would indicate that this is the case.

We live in a very rural part of Bridgton but one of the neighbor's bait boxes was placed about 75 feet from our dogs' chain-link enclosure that is accessed directly from our deck. The chain-link fence cannot prevent sick rodents from coming into the enclosure.

We did not initially know that a licensed pest control service had been hired to place these poison bait boxes around the exterior of our neighbor's house until a family member of this same neighbor come over to visit us.

This is how we learned that the many dead or sick chipmunks, red squirrels and mice that we had been finding around our property, in our frog pool, and in the dogs' enclosure were killed by the rodenticide placed in our neighbor's bait boxes. It was also during this time that Starling found a squirrel and ate most of it.

My husband called the neighbor's pest control service and got the name of the rodenticide that was being used. We then learned from the state toxicologist in Augusta that this rodenticide could cause secondary poisoning if an animal ingested a poisoned rodent.

We tried to talk our neighbor into using snap traps and other devices that poison control recommended but our neighbor was not interested. It is unconscionable that a poisonous material, which can intrude another person's property and cause harm, is not made known to neighbors. Starling's poisoning could have been prevented if we had been notified of the poison application.

Needless to say, I am also concerned about the poisoning and killing of non-target animals such as fox, owls, eagles, and hawks and, while I don't know of a practical solution for protecting wildlife, this bill will prevent other pets from becoming ill. Please endorse L.D. 356.

Thank you,

Lega and Jim Medcalf  
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