



OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ED FLYNN

## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS PEST CONTROL AND THE DISCOVERY OF LEPTOSPIROSIS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

**WHEREAS:** Pest control is critical to our residents' quality of life, as rats and rodents are not only a nuisance, but they also impact public health, the sanitization of our neighborhoods, and the maintenance of our properties; *and*

**WHEREAS:** There has been a dramatic rise in rodent and pest activities in our neighborhoods since the COVID-19 pandemic, with residents and businesses reporting to 311 about the increase of rats and other rodents on our streets and homes; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Last year, a Tufts University study on the Boston Urban Rat population found that rats in Boston are carrying and spreading leptospirosis, a bacterial disease that impacts both humans and other animals. Leptospirosis is spread by the urine of infected animals through contact with infected soil and water; *and*

**WHEREAS:** The spread of leptospirosis has been aided by climate change, as the bacteria thrives in warmer conditions. There are concerns on how this may impact vulnerable populations such as the homeless, as well as our street cleaners and sanitary health workers, and those who come in regular contact with animals; *and*

**WHEREAS:** This Tufts University report reinforces the urgent need for the City of Boston to make pest control a top priority. Following last year's release of the city's Boston Rodent Action Plan (BRAP), it is important to review if the initiative is delivering results, and to revisit the recommendation of the study's author, renowned rodent urbanologist Dr. Bobby Corrigan for the creation of a dedicated position of a "rat czar", as New York City implemented in 2023; *and*

**WHEREAS:** With warmer temperatures impacting Boston in the longer term, the city should have concrete measures in place to adequately tackle the rise in rodent activities and the spread of potential diseases, including more inspections, public awareness campaigns and public outreach with language access; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Currently, pest control continues to be a cross-departmental effort in the City of Boston. It is critical that the city continues to devote the necessary resources and attention to this significant quality of life and public health issue. Having a dedicated position and office on pest control could allow us to better focus on the issue, provide a more streamlined and coordinated process in reducing pests, and come up with more innovative ways in preventing pest infestations; *and*

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:**

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss measures for pest control and reducing the spread of leptospirosis in the City of Boston. Representatives from the Inspectional Services Department, Code Enforcement, Public Works, as well as other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to attend.

**Filed in Council: July 9, 2025**