



Beaver Institute, Inc.

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December 15, 2021

The Honorable Edward Markey
Member
U.S. Senate Committee on
Environment and Public Works
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Markey,

My name is Michael Callahan. I am a resident of Southampton, Massachusetts. I am the Founder and President of the 501(c)3 nonprofit Beaver Institute, Inc. (www.beaverinstitute.org), and the Founder and Owner of a small business, Beaver Solutions LLC (www.beaversolutions.com).

Since its founding in 2000, Beaver Solutions has nonlethally resolved over 1,900 beaver-human conflicts with innovative beaver control devices such as beaver dam pipes and road culvert protection devices. Our clients include local and state transportation departments, municipalities, utilities, businesses homeowners, landowners, and others.

Since its founding in 2017, the mission of the Beaver Institute has been to help people and beavers coexist by providing assistance to those experiencing beaver conflicts, supporting scientific research, training conflict-mitigation professionals, and educating the public about the beaver's critical role in creating climate-resilient wetland ecosystems. While both organizations are based in Massachusetts, Beaver Solutions serves clients throughout southern New England, and the Beaver Institute supports beaver coexistence throughout the United States and Canada.

In 2019 I had the pleasure of listening to you speak in Northampton, MA about the Green New Deal. Our work with beaver control and beaver wetland restoration meshes perfectly with the goals of the Green New Deal. So you'll be happy to know that the Beaver Institute is currently training beaver wetland professionals across the US and Canada to do this important environmental work. These beaver wetlands are immensely valuable in the face of climate change.¹

I was recently approached by the Animal Welfare Institute ("AWI") about an idea to establish a federal grant program that would provide \$1 million per year to states, tribes, agencies, local governments, landowners, conservation organizations, and others to help pay for flow devices and other nonlethal beaver damage management measures. The program would be administered

¹ See Beaver Institute, The Climate Change Beaver Coalition, Climate Change & Beavers – What's the Connection?, <https://www.beaverinstitute.org/programs/climate-resilience-beaver-project/overview/>; see also enclosed.

by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (“USFWS”) and modeled after a similar USFWS program called the “Wolf Livestock Loss Demonstration Project,” which provides \$1 million annually to states with wolf populations to help pay for nonlethal measures to reduce livestock depredation by wolves.

I wish to express my support for this proposal. Working to keep beavers on the landscape is our most cost-effective means to promote a healthy environment and combat climate change. Most human-beaver conflicts can be resolved through the use of nonlethal mitigation devices. For example, wire mesh fencing can be used to keep beavers from felling trees. Pond-leveling devices can be used to prevent beaver ponds from flooding roads. And sturdy fencing can be used to stop beavers from plugging and damaging culverts.

Further, these tools can be more cost-effective than lethally removing beavers and destroying their dams. Indeed, a Beaver Institute 20-year study in the town of Billerica, Massachusetts, demonstrated that flow devices were about half as expensive as lethal control and dam removal, saving local taxpayers thousands of dollars every year.²

In addition, beaver ponds and beaver-created wetlands provide many valuable ecological services such as cleaning and storing water, creating habitat for a wide range of wildlife and endangered species, and helping to combat the effects of climate change. Beaver ponds build climate resilience by serving as buffers against wildfires, protecting biodiversity and endangered species, decreasing downstream storm damage, and storing precious water in arid regions. Because beavers (and beaver damage) occur in every state in the continental United States, communities and ecosystems throughout the country would stand to benefit from financial assistance with, and increased use of, effective, long-lasting beaver mitigation measures.

I encourage your office to consider AWI’s proposal. I would be happy to meet with you or your staff to answer any questions or share more details about my experience in this field. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Callahan

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² Callahan, M., R. Berube, and I. Tourkantonis. 2019. Municipal Beaver Management: 20 Year Study in Billerica, MA. Association of Massachusetts Wetland Scientists No. 107, 17. Enclosed and available at: <https://www.beaverinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Billerica-Beaver-Study-AMWS-2019.pdf>.