



The Developing Alternative Mitigation Systems (DAMS) for Beavers Act



Beavers have been called "[climate-solving heroes](#)" and are known as "ecosystem engineers" for the role they play in physically shaping their environment. These often misunderstood creatures provide an assortment of ecological benefits ranging from water storage and filtration to the creation of wildlife-resistant riparian areas. Beavers also support biodiversity by creating habitat for endangered and vulnerable species, including species of salmon and trout.

Unfortunately, beavers can also damage public infrastructure, agricultural lands, and private property. In response to beaver damage, private trappers and the federal government kill tens of thousands of beavers across the country each year. This killing is often unnecessary due to the availability of cost-effective, nonlethal devices, such as water flow control devices, culvert-protective fencing, and pond levelers, which can successfully prevent such damage. Lethal control is also rarely a long-term solution as beavers dispersing in search of suitable habitat can quickly recolonize trapped areas. By contrast, flow devices can provide long-term relief and typically last 10 years before they need to be replaced.

Nonlethal coexistence measures are long-term, cost-effective, and ecologically beneficial

A [study](#) in Virginia compared the costs of repairing road damage caused by beavers at 14 sites before and after the use of flow devices. The state transportation department saved hundreds of thousands of dollars per year when nonlethal measures were implemented. Specifically, the "before" costs were more than \$300,000 per year, which included preventive road maintenance, damage repairs, and lethal removal of beavers. By contrast, the cost of installing flow devices was less than \$45,000 and maintenance costs thereafter were \$277 per year.

Similarly, a 20-year [collaboration](#) between the town of Billerica, Massachusetts, and Beaver Solutions found that, on average, the cost of trapping and dam breaching was \$409 per beaver conflict site per year, while the cost of installing and maintaining flow devices was \$229 per site per year. By investing in flow devices at sites where they were feasible, Billerica saved its taxpayers \$7,740 per year.

Examples:

- Trees can be shielded by encircling them with wire mesh fencing or coating their trunks with a mixture of paint and sand that deters beavers from chewing.
- Infrastructure and property can be protected from flooding by installing water flow control devices, which allow water to pass through the dam, thus maintaining acceptable water levels
- Fencing has also proven effective at preventing beavers from blocking culverts, which can damage roads.

The Solution: DAMS for Beavers Act

The Developing Alternative Mitigation Systems (DAMS) for Beavers Act would establish a five-year pilot grant program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to support the use of nonlethal methods to solve beaver conflicts. This program would provide \$1M annually for nonlethal beaver coexistence projects across the United States. Tribes, state and federal agencies, local governments, landowners, and nonprofits would all be eligible for grant funding.

This program will save tax dollars, enhance ecosystems, mitigate the effects of climate change, and protect infrastructure.

This legislation has been endorsed by 80+ organizations and Tribes.

Staff Contacts: Shanta Katipamula, shanta.katipamula@mail.house.gov and Alyssa Quinn alyssa.quinn@mail.house.gov