



Kindness and Care for Animals®

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept this letter of strong support for the Beaver Institute and its President, Mike Callahan. The MSPCA has worked with Mike for almost twenty years to help promote humane solutions to conflicts with beaver and reduce reliance on inhumane trapping methods.

Mike's foresight, leadership, and ability to connect with and educate key decision makers has been a crucial component in the changes that we have seen in perceptions about humane resolutions to conflicts with beaver in our state.

Mike's commitment to this work is deep. He began as a volunteer almost twenty years ago. After a 1996 ballot question passed in our state prohibiting the use of body-gripping traps and was met with controversy locally and at the state level, Mike not only educated himself about existing solutions to conflicts with beaver, but committed to educating others. In time, Mike realized that he could have the most impact—and best meet the growing need for humane solutions to wildlife conflicts—if he transitioned his volunteer efforts into a business.

The result was Mike's company, Beaver Solutions. While Beaver Solutions is a for-profit entity, Mike has managed it with the greater good in mind. For example, Mike eschews the bottom line by declining to install water flow devices where he believes that the topography is not conducive to a successful device. Instead of simply installing a device and taking a check, Mike is more concerned about building the reputation of the devices, expanding their use, and ensuring their long-term success. But, Mike doesn't just say no when a project might be a challenge. He has also, numerous times, gone back to the drawing board and created new designs and devices to meet a given need. Mike makes practice of finding creative solutions to challenging problems.

Another important aspect of Beaver Solutions' work has been Mike's ability to build relationships with local decision makers and in doing so, convince them to change their approach to addressing beaver-related conflicts. Mike has worked closely with city and town administrators across the state and has built a reputation for honesty and integrity. His strong reputation has allowed him to convince (sometimes-skeptical) decision makers that the humane solution is the best solution.

Importantly, he has also connected town administrators with resources that they might not otherwise consider, such as a grant that helps to pay for the cost of water flow devices. For eight years, the MSPCA has applied for, received, and administered a grant that pays for a portion of the installation cost of a new water flow device. The grant is available for individuals, municipalities, and businesses. The purpose of the grant program is to help remove a financial barrier that may discourage property owners from trying the device. While, over time, the water flow device costs on average less than repeated trapping, the up-front cost can discourage a sometimes-hesitant audience from taking the first step to this humane conflict resolution tool. The grant program has been a fantastic success and over \$100,000 has been distributed to date.

A big part of that success can be ascribed to Mike's ability to serve as a facilitator and bridge-builder, roles he plans to carry forward to the Beaver Institute. We feel extraordinarily confident in Mike's ability to take these concepts and model, which he has honed through twenty years of work, and to take them nationwide to help beaver, ecosystems, and other species of wildlife.

Sincerely,



Laura Hagen
Deputy Director, Advocacy
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals