

*Emailed Testimony from Bev Soychak April 10, 2025*

Thank you for making the time to be educated and inspired by Skip Lisle! Skip is responsible for my journey that started 5 years ago with a flooding incident on our Cedar Lake Pond. We worked with VFW and had no success and were told trapping was encouraged. Not willing to except that we found Skip and the journey began for me and our small town of Monkton. This journey has resulted in the Vermont Beaver Association which contracts with Skip to do work all over the state. Our top priorities are working with towns and organizations to find SAFE non-lethal options to protect infrastructure, roadways, ecosystems and beavers all together and we have done that through this process very successfully.

Beavers in Vermont are getting really bad PR right now and it's clearly not deserved. Passions for wildlife run hot and cold in Vermont depending on your beliefs but the truth is the truth, and facts are simply facts, and we rely on both of those. We are currently undergoing yet another attack from our VFW department because of lack of education and understanding of current up to date methods of water hydrology and beavers. This is a very specialized field, and we are lucky enough to have Skip who is a native Vermonter living in our state. Yet he is constantly overlooked for his expertise. So many offers have been made to VFW to expand their knowledge by us, Skip and Beaver Institute, all met with silence. Since when is forming cohesive and collaborative bonds with other organizations a bad thing? Since when is bettering your education frowned upon? It's rather perplexing to me why the eagerness to improve from the one person who invented these devices is not welcomed.

The current situation in the state is very upsetting to many communities and we are getting calls from across the country asking us what's going on? From California, Nevada and others, everyone is wondering why such drastic measures are being mandated especially since Vermont is one of the states leading the united front of positive education and support and the many grassroots organizations are leading the way to healthy, happy cost-effective ecosystems at no expense to state we are doing it all on our own working together. . . Nothing benefits Vermonters more than spending less money not more and the price tag attached to this latest project will be astronomical to Vermonters. One current site is so far out they we will have to build a road to get to it. All of this to tear out 6 feet on concrete on private property that is no threat to anyone except to a mandate. Something is wrong here. We need to have better control over government overreach, communities are losing confidence in VFW that's nothing to be proud of.

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