SOUTHEAST BEAVER ALLIANCE

November 17, 2026

SUBMITTED VIA E-PORTAL

The Southeast Beaver Alliance (SEBA) submits these comments regarding the 2026–2027 Wildlife Regulation Review and Amendment Process. We are pleased that the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) has requested public input and we offer suggestions for your consideration as you work through the review process. In particular, we support changes to the regulations around beaver as an important ally for conservation of Virginia's aquatic and wetland ecosystems.

DWR recognizes beavers' important ecological contributions through its public information, habitat assessments, and conservation actions. DWR's North American Beaver information page acknowledges that beaver dams provide invaluable ecosystem services to aquatic, avian, and terrestrial wildlife while benefiting people by reducing the severity of droughts and floods and contributing to groundwater recharge. [1] Virginia's 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) similarly recognizes beavers' historic and positive effects on riverine floodplains, swamps and wetlands, ponds, and early successional forests, noting that beaver ponds support Species of Greatest Conservation Need, foster resilient wetlands, increase groundwater levels, and improve water quality by reducing nutrient runoff and sedimentation.[2] DWR further recognizes the value of these habitats by identifying beaver and dam removal, dam dismantling, and beaver trapping as threats within the SWAP,[3] and by including conservation actions to research additional ways in which natural wetlands and water bodies created by beaver dams can support species, to educate landowners about beavers' role in maintaining fish and wildlife habitat, and to promote flow devices, including pond levelers, as nonlethal management tools.[4]

We thank DWR for the existing regulation which creates a continuous closed season for the hunting and shooting of beaver on all public lands and waters.[5] We support the continuing inclusion of this provision. Additionally, we support the ban on the sale of furbearer pelts, carcasses, and parts without a fur dealer permit.[6]

In consideration of the importance of beavers to Virginia's ecology as a keystone species, SEBA suggests the following changes:

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[1] *North American Beaver*, Va. Wildlife Res. Div. (last updated March 18, 2025), https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/information/north-american-beaver/.
[2] *See* Va. Dep't. Wildlife Res., *Virginia Wildlife Action Plan* (2025) at 74.
[3] *Id*. at 127, 131, 133.
[4] *Id*. at 144.
[5] 4 Va. Admin. Code § 15-60-10, https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title4/agency15/chapter60/section10/.
[6] 4 Va. Admin. Code § 15-40-275, https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title4/agency15/chapter40/section275/.

1. Removing the provision which allows continuous open season to trap beaver within the incorporated limits of any city or town, as well as select counties[7] since Virginia law expressly allows the killing of beavers by a landowner when they are actively damaging crops or land during closed season[8] or by the Director for the purposes of animal population control[9] or when a disease in wildlife has implications for human, domestic, and agricultural health.[10]
2. Removing the provision allowing traps in water for beaver at any time in any city, town, or county, for the same reasons cited in suggestion 1.[11]
3. Adding bag limits and reporting requirements for beavers in the revised regulations.
4. Removing the first and third exceptions to the prohibition of sale without a fur dealer permit.[12]

We appreciate this opportunity to provide feedback on Virginia's hunting, trapping, and other wildlife restrictions. We look forward to working with DWR to help conserve and restore the ecosystems which house the state's rich biodiversity. If you have any questions or would like to discuss these comments further, please contact us at southeastbeaver@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Don Jacobson
Executive Director

[7] 4 Va. Admin. Code § 15-60-20, https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title4/agency15/chapter60/section20/.
[8] Va. Code Ann. § 29.1-518.
[9] 4 Va. Admin. Code § 15-40-240, https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title4/agency15/chapter40/section240/.
[10] 4 Va. Admin. Code § 15-20-220(B), https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title4/agency15/chapter20/section220/.
[11] Va. Admin Code § 15-40-230, https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title4/agency15/chapter40/section230/.
[12] 4 Va. Admin Code § 15-40-275(1), (3), https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title4/agency15/chapter40/section275/. These exceptions allow, without a permit, "[a]ny hunter or trapper, or any person lawfully engaged in the business of fur farming, to sell or dispose of legally taken or possessed raw pelts and unskinned carcasses of fur-bearing animals, coyotes, and nutria at any time" as well as "[a]ny person to buy or sell at any time pelts that are not defined as being raw, skinned carcasses, taxidermy mounts, or any other parts of legally taken and possessed fur-bearing animals, coyotes, and nutria…." including skulls, teeth, claws, bones, glands, and secretions.