

# Beavers should landscape, government should pay

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**Beavers keep busy, a fact that doesn't go unnoticed by towns that have to fix infrastructure as a result of the rodents' hard work. Now the Swiss parliament has agreed that the federal government should pick up the tab.**

Beavers are a protected species in Switzerland, and they have no natural enemies. As their population grows, so do their "landscaping" activities, which can have an expensive impact on riverside paths and canal embankments. Currently, federal funding covers only the damage to crops and trees. But beaver-related damage to Switzerland costs an estimated CHF1 million (\$989,385) per year.

On a first run, the Senate had rejected the motion to expand damage coverage. But on Tuesday, the Senate voted in favor, 25 to 12, following a unanimous "Yes" vote in the House of Representatives. Now it's up to a commission in the House of Representatives to create a draft bill.

Prized for their pelts, beavers were hunted nearly to extinction in Switzerland by the 19th century. According to WWF, some 140 beavers were brought to Switzerland for resettlement between 1958 and 1977. Today there are about 2,800, but beavers are still considered a threatened species in Switzerland. Conservationists say that for the species to thrive in Switzerland, the nation's various beaver populations need to mix more.