

[https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-oregon-needs-tighter-regulations-for-mink-lets-see-a-good-settlement/article\\_d5aaf024-8674-11eb-92e6-8b82ee8289f3.html](https://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-oregon-needs-tighter-regulations-for-mink-lets-see-a-good-settlement/article_d5aaf024-8674-11eb-92e6-8b82ee8289f3.html)

## Oregon needs tighter mink regulations

Thank you for pointing out that we at the Center for Biological Diversity are absolutely aiming to reshape how Oregon treats animals by seeking to end beaver trapping and hunting last year and this year improve how mink farms are regulated.

Here's why: COVID-19 can and has been passed back and forth between humans and mink (this has already resulted in a viral mutation). COVID-19 has ravaged mink farms in Europe and the U.S. At least three mink escaped an Oregon mink farm that was quarantined following a COVID-19 outbreak (and two tested positive for COVID-19).

In addition to the threat of mink becoming a reservoir for COVID-19 mutations that may undo our human vaccination efforts, we're concerned that farmed mink could spread COVID-19 to wild mink and their relatives, like otters, fishers, martens and badgers, potentially decimating wild animal populations.

We've been through a lot this past year. A lot has changed. Many of us are thinking about what we want to keep changing. If we want to stop the next pandemic and get this one under control, we need to make changes to the facilities that provide ideal breeding grounds for pandemics.

Oregon's mink factory farms are a threat to public health and wildlife. Our petition to add mink to ODFW's prohibited species list and Senate Bill 832, the bill to close Oregon's mink farms and shift their workers to new employment, would reshape our relationship with animals to provide us all a safer future.

Lori Ann Burd is the environmental health director for the Center for Biological Diversity.