



TESTIMONY FOR HB0216

Environment - Salt Applicator Certification Program - Establishment

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Qi

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0216 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Not surprisingly, we learn decades later that road salt is very detrimental to our health. Road salt can enter water supplies by percolating down through the ground or by running off from roads and parking lots into water reservoirs and shallow wells. It is very hard to get it out of drinking water.

Chemically speaking, road salt is one and the same as table salt - they consist of both sodium and chlorine. That said, sprinkling it on your fries is probably not a good idea since it takes a great deal of refinement for the mineral compound to be converted into the salt we use in everyday life. Road salt is not something that we want in our water.

Other than road salt filtering into our water supply, there is environmental damage that comes with along with it, as well as damage to roads and vehicles. Currently, Public contractors have to have training on how much salt to apply to roads so that they don't treat the roads with too much salt. However, there is not enough oversight of private contractors.

This bill will require the Department of the Environment to establish a Salt Applicator Certification Program to encourage efficient winter maintenance of roadways, parking lots, and sidewalks through the use of salt or salt alternatives. Each commercial applicator would have to participate in the program and maintain a valid certificate.

Using salt alternatives, and not spreading too much salt are important ways to ensure that we do not have an abundance of road salt accumulating on our roads and filtering into our water supply.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.