
February 8, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 216 – Environment – Salt Applicator Certification Program – Establishment

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 216 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

House Bill 216 requires the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) to establish a Salt Applicator Certification Program to encourage commercial applicators to use efficient winter maintenance strategies when applying salt or salt alternatives.

The MDOT State Highway Administration (SHA) manages a robust statewide salt management program and takes pride in the dedication and focus on environmental stewardship during winter operations. Over the past eight years, the SHA’s internal and external salt reduction efforts have led to a significant decrease in sodium chloride impacting Maryland waterways. The SHA has productive collaboration with the MDE, in which both agencies monitor SHA’s salt application practices, conduct statewide analysis of operational impacts, and prepare educational material on the benefit and techniques of environmental stewardship in salt application, all with the goal of protecting Maryland’s waterways.

The SHA requests clarification on the definition of “commercial applicators.” House Bill 216 specifically excludes State employees from the definition of “commercial applicators”; however, it is unclear whether applicators working under contract with State agencies and using State salt materials are excluded from the certification program. Furthermore, the SHA requests clarification on if “commercial applicators” only references the owner of the company, or if it also includes individual equipment operators.

Currently, SHA provides annual salt management training to all contract equipment operators performing winter operations. SHA inspects all equipment, State and contract, and supplies the materials used in salt application on State roadways.

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The MDOT respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 216.

Respectfully submitted,

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