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**Testimony in SUPPORT with Amendments of HB0216- Environment- Salt Applicator
Certification Program- Establishment**

February 6, 2023

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT with amendments** of **HB0216** on behalf of Waterkeepers Chesapeake.

Our state is defined by the Chesapeake's waterways, which contribute to our economy, and are a centerpiece of our culture and traditions in Maryland. Waterkeepers Chesapeake, and the clean water advocates we support across the State (signed below), work with local counties, towns and communities to adopt stormwater management best practices that mitigate the harmful runoff from our roadways and other impervious surfaces. **In the winter months, road salt is amongst the most threatening pollutants entering local waterways through stormwater runoff.**

Salt increases the conductivity in our waterways, and can alter ecosystems and poison freshwater species in streams, creeks and ponds. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, "road salt can contaminate drinking water, kill or endanger wildlife, increase soil erosion, and damage private and public property."^[1] Considering the threats to both our environmental and human health, our state should prioritize alternative methods of road salt to mitigate these threats and drawbacks. This bill will require the Department of the Environment to establish a Salt Applicator Certification Program to encourage efficient winter maintenance that considers the use of salt alternatives on our roads. This is an important step in reducing harmful effects of stormwater in Maryland.

While we support this bill, we also feel that it does not go far enough. A Salt Applicator Certification Program should be applied to both private and public applicators. Additionally, we recommend mandatory record keeping for each application, both the amount and the rate. We continue to advocate for additional staff positions and increased funding for MDE so they can carry out their essential duties, including the implementation of this proposed program.

For these reasons stated above, we urge the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE with amendments** report on **HB0216**.

Sincerely,

Waterkeepers Chesapeake and partnering clean water organizations signed below:

[1] United States Environmental Protection Agency. [*Winter is Coming! and with it, tons of salt on our roads.*](#)

Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper, ShoreRivers

Elle Bassett, South, West, and Rhode Riverkeeper, Arundel Rivers Federation

Gabby Ross, Assateague Coastkeeper, Assateague Coastal Trust

Taylor Smith-Hams, Advocacy & Outreach Senior Manager, Blue Water Baltimore

Betsy Nicholas, VP of Programs, Potomac Riverkeeper Network

Trey Sherard, Anacostia Riverkeeper

Theaux Le Gardeur, Gunpowder Riverkeeper