



Testimony in SUPPORT with Amendments of HB0371- Environment- Salt Applicator Certification Program- Establishment

Environment and Transportation Committee

February 9, 2022

February 7, 2022

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT with amendments** of **HB0371** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland's Eastern Shore with 3,000 members. Our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education.

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. As the Chester Riverkeeper, I 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 the water through stormwater runoff.**

Salt increases the conductivity in our waterways, and can alter ecosystems and poison fresh water 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 also recommend including language on repercussions or penalties for excessive salt use. We continue to advocate for additional staff positions and increased funding for MDE so they can carry out their essential duties, including implementation of this proposed program.

For these reasons stated above, ShoreRivers urges the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE with amendments** report on **HB0371**.

Sincerely,

Annie Richards

Chester Riverkeeper, on behalf of **ShoreRivers**

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

ShoreRivers

Isabel Hardesty, Executive Director

Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper
Elle Bassett, Miles-Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper
