

**Written Testimony Regarding
House Bill 371 and Senate Bill 246
Environment – Salt Applicator Certification Program – Establishment**

From the desk of:

F Edward Harrison, Jr

9608B Fountain School Rd., Union Bridge MD 21791

Email: rdsefe@aol.com Phone: 410-795-8691

Opposed to this Bill

[My opinion on this legislation reflects my opinion and mine alone, and not of any organization or group that I may be affiliated with]

I have been pushing snow for most all of my 62 years on this planet. When I started my contracting business in 1993, a construction and excavating business, in the winter I hired out myself to another contractor to push parking lots in Westminster, Owings Mills, Baltimore City and Columbia. I obtained a contract pushing snow and salting for Carroll County from about 1995 to 1999. I pushed snow and salted for Verizon in 2000 for another contractor. I then obtained a contract with the Maryland State Highway Administration from 2001 thru 2017, pushing snow and salting. During that time, I also provided operators and equipment to push snow in the Columbia Mall and Montgomery County Department of Transportation, for a couple of those years. I have since gave up plowing snow to pursue other ventures.

I have been concerned about this subject for many years. Seeing how salting practices are implemented during my experiences in the snow removal field. Then, being in the Onsite Wastewater field and being enlightened to the well contamination issue from road salt.

This Bill will do very little to mediate salt pollution. Contractors that do snow removal on most private properties (IE: parking lots; shopping centers; HOA streets; and other commercial, privately owned, roadways and pathways) are regulated by the property owner. Most property owners monitor the amount of salt applied to their property, due the heavy cost of salt. The price of salt, delivered to the property, can be in excess of \$100 a ton. The way most private lots are handled, are to clear the road first, then apply a little salt to melt what is left. (This is not ALL cases, but most) Snow removal is a nuisance expense for the property owner and they hate paying any more than they have to.

There are some property owners, usually the properties owned by larger corporations, that will splurge on salt for liability protection. They calculate that paying for salt is better than paying lawyers for “Slip and Fall” litigation. And, if they are willing to splurge on salt, I am pretty sure they would be willing to pay any fine associated with over salting. (Better dealing with the known consequence than the unknown consequence.)

The much larger culprit of over salting is the Municipal, County, and State entities. They don't have to pay for the salt, the tax payer does. In the preamble to the snow season, the entity will make all drivers attend a class in proper plowing and salting techniques. They will inspect and calibrate the trucks, give each truck a sheet of paper showing what setting to put the dial on in consideration of truck speed and pounds per lane mile that you are told to spread. Then they

**Written Testimony Regarding
House Bill 371 and Senate Bill 246
Environment – Salt Applicator Certification Program – Establishment**

From the desk of:

F Edward Harrison, Jr

9608B Fountain School Rd., Union Bridge MD 21791

Email: rdsefe@aol.com Phone: 410-795-8691

measure all of the salt loaded on each truck, and how much is dumped off after each event. This all works very well during the first snow event of wet snow, freezing rain and/or light accumulation. But, when the real snow hits, all of the previous procedures are thrown out the window. It becomes about "Public Safety" and the orders are: "Turn it up!". God forbid snow starts to accumulate on one street and not another. Citizens start calling their representatives, the representative calls the highway department, the highway department (Knee jerks) and puts out the directive to "Put it down".

The real problem is culture. Up North people stay home until the event is over and give the crews time to clear or groom the roads. In today's society (and especially the metro Balt., DC corridor), the public wants instant results and do not accept an inconvenience in their way of life due to weather. "That's what I pay taxes for".

Certifying private contractors that do snow removal on private property would just add another layer of burden on private industry.

A better solution would be to pass legislation to remove "Slip and Fall" litigation during snow emergencies and incentivize citizens to remain home during snow emergencies. After the past two years of this Covid crisis, many people have discovered they can telecommute. Maybe we can build on that.

F Edward Harrison, Jr