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Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1055 Environment – Highways – Salt Application
Environment and Transportation Committee
February 23, 2024

Dear Chair Korman and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF HB1055**, on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

House Bill 1055 will require our state agencies, counties, and municipalities to maintain records of highway salt application during the winter. This will provide clarity on the total amount of salt applied on highways, schools, educational institutions, and public parks. This bill will bring Maryland up to speed on tracking this issue. Other states that have taken action such as creating salt applicator certifications or education programs include Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, and New Hampshire.

Runoff from winter road salting can increase the conductivity of our waterways, altering ecosystems and negatively impacting freshwater species in streams, creeks, and ponds. According to the EPA, “road salt can contaminate drinking water, kill or endanger wildlife, increase soil erosion, and damage private and public property.”¹ This bill is an important step in better understanding the current practices of applying road salt within our state, so that we might better understand the impacts.

Arundel Rivers Federation strongly supports protecting, preserving, and restoring water quality within the Chesapeake Bay and we respectfully request a **FAVORABLE REPORT on HB1055**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper
Arundel Rivers Federation

¹ Environmental Protection Agency. “Winter is Coming! And with it, tons of salt on our roads. 2020.
<https://www.epa.gov/snep/winter-coming-and-it-tons-salt-our-roads>