



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 1055

Environment – Highways – Salt Application

Date: February 23, 2024

Position: **Favorable**

To: House Environmental & Transportation Committee

From: Gussie Maguire
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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 1055 which requires all State agencies, counties, and municipalities to track and report on road salt applied each year, including on highways, at schools, and in public parks. These entities are to include salt applied by private contractors.

The application of road salt for anti-icing and deicing during winter weather keeps Maryland residents on the roads and sidewalks safe. However, sodium chloride and other salts negatively impact freshwater tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay. Benthic organisms such as insect larvae and crayfish and fish species like brook trout and perch are sensitive to elevated salt levels: too much salt can interrupt breeding habits and reduce populations. This bill does not limit the application of salt, but by requiring tracking and reporting, it encourages state agencies and other entities to be mindful of how much salt is applied each year. Collecting this information can also assist with data-driven decision making about how to most effectively use brine and road salt to protect people and prevent damage to the environment.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 1055.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.