



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 23, 2024

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 1055 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Highways - Salt Application

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department provides this letter of support on this legislation. The Department appreciates the intent of this legislation, and we actively work to minimize salt application and resulting runoff in our state parks, forests, wildlife areas, and other public lands – all while striving to meet access and safety needs throughout the winter season. Given the relatively low volume of salt application by some state agencies and land units, the Department suggests an amendment to the legislation that identifies a potential minimum reporting threshold to alleviate the burden on state agencies with relatively minor winter road maintenance responsibilities while still achieving the desired legislative goal:

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 2, in line 4, after “APPLIED” insert “IN NUMBER OF TONS”; and after line 11, insert:

“(C) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE PARKS, FORESTS OR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA SYSTEM IN WHICH LESS THAN 5 TONS OF SALT IS APPLIED IN A WINTER SEASON.”

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Without the aforementioned amendment, it is anticipated that operational impacts to the Department of Natural Resources will include the dedication of staff time to develop and maintain a tracking and reporting system of salt applied on Department-owned and maintained facilities. Following the initial development and deployment of said system, existing department staff would be required to

absorb the recurring responsibilities of tracking and reporting all salt applications to ensure ongoing compliance with the legislation.

Provided that the Department’s salt usage could be tracked through attentive inventory management and manually recording dates, rates, and mileage associated with each application, fiscal impacts to

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DNR-owned and maintained facilities are expected to be minimal. If a more robust tracking system is required to meet the standard intended by the legislation, then fiscal impacts could be far more significant, necessitating the procurement and installation of calibrated logging equipment on salt trucks within the agency fleet and scales within storage facilities. Precise application rate and GIS-enabled location tracking would require an automated database and reporting system. Such products and services are available through a variety of vendors, however contract costs are unknown at this time. Determining the projected fiscal impacts of this legislation across the Department is therefore quite challenging without additional clarification in the bill language and information concerning the precise modifications needed to the Department's winter road maintenance operations.

As the Department's road salt application is minimal relative to state agencies and units within county and municipal governments for which winter road operations are a more primary concern, it is recommended that the bill be amended to reflect a minimal reporting threshold of 5 tons.

BILL EXPLANATION

This legislation requires state agencies, counties, and municipalities to maintain records of salt applications made for the winter weather season and submit an annual report of all applications to include the total amount of salt applied and the amount of salt per lane mile under its jurisdiction; salt applied at institutions of higher education and public parks; and salt applied by private contractors. The legislation is stated to take effect October 1, 2024.