



March 5, 2024

To: William Pines, Administrator, MDOT SHA
via Acting Special Assistant to the Administrator's Office, Trudy Edwards
(tedwards6@mdot.maryland.gov)
Serena McIlwain, Secretary, MDE (mde.secretary@marylnad.gov)
D. Lee Curry, Director, Water and Science Administration, MDE (lee.currey@maryland.gov)

Dear Administrator Pines and Secretary McIlwain:

I am writing on behalf of the Advocacy Committee of the Friends of Sligo Creek (FOSC) in Montgomery County [and Prince George's County] to alert you to particularly excessive salt application problems in our watershed during several winter storm events this year.

Sligo Creek is very vulnerable to salt application. It is surrounded by roads that the SHA treats; and portions of the Capital Beltway drain very quickly into our creek. MCDOT treats many of our roads, as well.

This season, we have measured exceptionally elevated and worrying chloride levels in our stream after road treatments by both SHA and MCDOT. While we have not noticed acute damage to our Creek and its aquatic life, we just don't know. (Several years ago, salt draining from the Beltway killed many salamanders and fish in one of our tributaries.) On a longer term basis, we are very concerned that salt levels are trending upwards - and there appears to be no solution in sight.

In addition to the water quality testing we've been doing during this season's winter storms (but also routinely), we received reports and often photos of excessive salt dumped by applicators around our watershed. The reports pertain to MCDOT's applications, except for one. We received a specific report February 17 that there were piles of salt at the University Boulevard/Carroll Avenue intersection on Carroll in Takoma Park, Md. Because we understood that SHA treats both roads, we sent an online service request to the SHA through Montgomery County's Winter Storm portal form. We asked that SHA remove the excessive salt asap, noting that it harms nearby Sligo Creek and Long Branch Creek. We never heard back.

We are forwarding a letter we sent today to MCDOT and DEP, which provides more details on our situation.

We strongly urge you to take further steps to address the overall salt problem, and have offered some suggestions in our letter. It has become clear that the Salt Management Plan for

the State and our County isn't working for the environment. More fundamental changes need to be taken - the sooner the better. To launch a better way forward, additional fact-finding, research and comparisons of best practices internationally would seem very sensible.

Thank you.

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