



Friends of Sligo Creek
P. O. Box 11572
Takoma Park, MD 20913

January 27, 2025

To: Serena McIlwain, Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment (mde.secretary@maryland.gov)
William Pines, Administrator, State Highway Administration, Maryland Department of Transportation
via Selena McKissick, Special Assistant to the Administrator's Office, SMcKissick@mdot.maryland.gov

Dear Secretary McIlwain and Administrator Pines:

I am writing to deliver a tough message on behalf of Friends of Sligo Creek (FOSC), a nonprofit community organization dedicated to protecting, improving and appreciating Sligo Creek, the surrounding park and watershed.

Despite the great success of SHA and others in providing safe travel conditions throughout Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in bad weather and the State's Salt Management Plan, salt management by SHA, MDE and our local entities is failing in the critical mission of environmental stewardship.

Our testing suggests that winter salt treatment in Montgomery County and Prince George's County is degrading the water quality of our freshwater streams. Following salt treatment in early January, toxic levels of chloride persisted in our creek for more than two weeks, and conductivity levels have been very elevated. While we saw problems last year, this year is far worse.

As we wrote to both of you last year, Sligo Creek is very vulnerable to salt application. It is surrounded by roads that the SHA treats, including portions of the Capital Beltway, which drain very quickly into our creek. MCDOT treats many of our roads, as well.

Attached is a letter with additional details that we are sending to MCDOT and DEP in Montgomery County, Montgomery Parks, WSSC, DoE and DPW&E in Prince George's County, PG Parks, and DPW in the City of Takoma Park. Not only is our salt challenge an intragovernmental matter, it is an intergovernmental matter involving many parties.

We strongly urge your agencies to work closely with the other entities listed above to address the salt challenge, and have offered pragmatic suggestions in our letter. It has become evident that the Salt Management Plan for the State and our Counties is damaging the environment. More fundamental changes in approach need to be taken before the degradation of our fresh waterways is too great.

Sincerely,

Elaine Lamirande, President
Friends of Sligo Creek
president@fosc.org

cc:

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