



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Serena McIlwain, Secretary
Suzanne E. Dorsey, Deputy Secretary

February 11, 2025

Elaine Lamirande, President
Friends of Sligo Creek
P. O. Box 11572
Takoma Park, Maryland 20913

Dear Ms. Lamirande,

Thank you for reaching out regarding the impacts of deicing salt on Sligo Creek. The Secretary has received your correspondence and asked me to respond on behalf of the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). We appreciate your concern and share your commitment to protecting our freshwater systems.

As you noted, balancing winter road safety with environmental protection is a complex challenge. MDE and the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) are actively working together, along with local partners, to reduce the excessive use of deicing salts while maintaining safe road conditions. We also appreciate the thoughtful suggestions in your letter and will take them into consideration.

Current Efforts to Reduce Salt Usage

SHA has updated its Salt Management Plan for 2024/25 to guide winter road maintenance efforts statewide. This plan ensures consistent practices across Maryland's highway system and promotes salt reduction strategies. You can review it here: [SHA Salt Management Plan](#).

Additionally, SHA has developed a Seasonal Salt Usage Reduction Techniques Fact Sheet to raise awareness and guide operators and the public in responsible salt use: [Salt Reduction Fact Sheet](#).

- National Collaboration: Recognizing the need for widespread education, SHA has partnered with 38 other states to develop training modules for non-DOT salt users. These modules will be available by mid-2026.

MDE's Actions to Improve Salt Management

MDE is taking several steps to address salt over-application:

- Stormwater Permits require counties to develop Salt Management Plans aligned with SHA's approach, covering most impervious surfaces in the state. These plans include:
 - Evaluation of new equipment and methods

- Strategies for ongoing program improvement
 - Training and outreach efforts
 - Participation in a local or state-run “Salt Academy”
 - Public education on best salt management practices
 - Tracking & Reporting Requirements to monitor salt usage by snowfall event, date, and total application per lane mile
- Engaging Private Property Owners: A significant portion of winter de-icing material is applied on private parking lots, sidewalks, and driveways. To address this, MDE has partnered with the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center (EFC) and the Chesapeake Landscape Professional Network (CLPN) to develop the SMART Salt Training Program. This voluntary program educates property managers on reducing salt use while maintaining safety.

How You Can Get Involved

We encourage you to:

- Stay Informed on Recent Efforts: Visit our [Winter Salts website](#) to explore Maryland’s salt reduction strategies, including efforts within the Sligo Creek watershed.
- Participate in WSSC Salt Summit Meetings to stay engaged with regional salt management efforts.
- Help Spread Awareness: Encouraging local organizations, businesses, and property managers to participate in the SMART Salt program will amplify our collective impact.

Thank you again for your concern and advocacy. We value your input and remain committed to reducing the environmental impact of deicing salts while maintaining public safety. If you’d like to discuss this further, please feel free to reach out:

Local and Regional Coordination

MDE also works closely with:

- Washington Suburban Sanitation Commission (WSSC)
 - Montgomery and Prince George’s counties
 - Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC)
- These agencies meet quarterly through WSSC’s Salt Summit to discuss salt management efforts and best practices.

Additionally, we coordinate with national salt reduction programs to enhance outreach and expand training opportunities for local communities.

Thank you again for your concern and advocacy. We value your input and remain committed to reducing the environmental impact of deicing salts while maintaining public safety. If you'd like to discuss this further, please feel free to reach out:

- **Lee Currey** – (410) 537-3567 | mde.wsado@maryland.gov
- **Gregorio Sandi** – (410) 537-3742 | Gregorio.Sandi@maryland.gov

Sincerely,



D. Lee Currey
Director, Water and Science Administration

cc:

Serena McIlwain, Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment
William Pines, Administrator, State Highway Administration, Maryland Department of Transportation