



March 11, 2026

To: Ed Tippet, Safeway District Manager
Ed.tippet@albertsons.com

Dear Mr. Tippet:

On behalf of Friends of Sligo Creek (FOSC), I am writing to thank you for working with Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and hiring a contractor to remove excessive salt that had been applied to the Safeway parking lot at 116 W. University Boulevard in Silver Spring, MD. When the excessive salt application was reported to us on February 5, 2026, FOSC reported the matter to DEP.

I am president of FOSC, a community-based non-profit group that works to protect and improve Sligo Creek and its surrounding watershed. We take an interest in this Safeway parking lot and others in the area because they are in the Sligo Creek watershed. Our creek flows into the Anacostia River, the Potomac River, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay, so what happens in our immediate vicinity can have broader environmental consequences for the larger watershed and communities further downstream.

Your responsiveness to the oversalting at this location helped protect Sligo Creek by removing the salt before it washed into the nearby storm drain and into the creek.

We have found in the past few years that excessive salt from winter salt treatment is significantly degrading the Creek's water quality. FOSC has a 25+ person team of volunteers who test for salt (chloride) weekly and during winter storm events along the 9+ miles of Sligo Creek. As in the past few years, this year's salt readings have often reached well above the level that is acutely toxic to aquatic life such as fish, and harmful to birds, mammals, and plants including trees. Our work has identified excessive salt treatment in parking lots as a major contributor to high salt levels in the creek.

We encourage neighbors in the Sligo Creek area to report excessive salt on roadways and parking lots to the County so it can be removed quickly before it enters the creek.

FOSC contributes data to a regional group that monitors salt in waterways and informs businesses, governments, and commercial and residential owners about best practices for salting in winter. You may be interested in an upcoming, free webinar hosted by this group, The Izaak Walton League of America, on ways to incorporate "Smart Salting" strategies into your contracts that both increase effectiveness of salting practices while reducing salt costs.

Contractual changes in salting contracts

Join us to learn more about putting performance-based practices into winter maintenance contracts. Traditional 'per-ton' or 'per-application' salt contracts can inadvertently encourage over-salting, leading to higher costs, damaged infrastructure, and environmental harm. This webinar provides property managers, HOA and Condo Association board members, etc. with a clear roadmap for transitioning to performance-based contracting—an approach that prioritizes measurable safety outcomes over the sheer volume of material used. You'll hear from Jason Swope, MD DC WV Coordinator of the Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional Program and Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council and a leader in the world of environmentally-minded smart salting, and from Benjamin Rhoades, Watershed Manager and Acting Environmental Director of the Reston Association, who has been working to put these lessons into practice in Reston, VA.

- **Topic:** *The "Smart Salting" Strategy: Winter Maintenance Contracts that Reduce Costs and Protect Liability*
- **Date:** *Monday, March 16, 2026*
- **Time:** *12:00 PM – 1:00 PM EST*
- **Speakers:** *Jason Swope (Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council) and Benjamin Rhoades (Reston Association)*
- **Registration and more information:**

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4yemPhtdStGmoW9w2vi2RO#/registration

Thank you again for your stewardship of the Sligo Creek watershed. We look forward to the opportunity to continue working with you in the future, at this and other Safeway locations, as well as with the County's DEP, to protect Sligo Creek.

Sincerely,

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