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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SB246: Environment – Salt Applicator Certification Program – Establishment**

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

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Salt keeps sidewalks and roadways safe in the winter weather. When too much is applied, the runoff threatens our waterways—especially the Chesapeake Bay.

Sodium chloride, the electrolyte in salt, makes fresh bodies of water uninhabitable for our native marine species by changing the chemistry. The runoff also seeps into the ground and causes our pipes to deteriorate. Corrosion is what caused the [Flint, Michigan water crisis](#).

[\\$2.3 billion](#) is spent each year in the U.S. on snow and ice removal; **an additional \$5 billion is spent repairing damage caused by salt.** [Oversalting affects historic buildings](#) made of limestone, sandstone, concrete, and brick. The salt crystallizes inside of the material's pores and generates enough force to cause it to break or crumble. Additionally, salt rusts metals and [damages vehicles](#), leading to holes and leaks in the undercarriage, making cars unsafe to drive.

All of this is preventable if less salt is used. [SB246](#) would require participation in the Smart Salt Applicator Certification Program by October 1, 2024. The bill will give the MD Department of Environment two years to craft the program-- which is already underway. Participants will learn about efficient use of road salt and salt alternatives on roadways, parking lots, and sidewalks.

To be clear, this legislation covers those hired to apply salt commercially and does not refer to residential property owners or renters. It also exempts state and local governments that face stricter regulations under the [MS4 Permit](#) (requiring extensive stormwater pollution reduction).

Those that complete the training program will likely reduce the amount of salt used by [30% to 70%](#). The best way to keep roads safe **and** protect our environment from the corrosive effects of oversalting is to guarantee that all salt applicators are “Smart Salt” certified.

**I urge a favorable report on SB246.**