

January 31, 2022

**FAVORABLE WITH BILL – SB0246: Environment - Salt Applicator Certification Program
- Establishment**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

We are writing in strong support of Senate Bill 0246 on behalf of Waterkeepers Chesapeake, a coalition of seventeen Waterkeepers, Riverkeepers, and Coastkeepers working to make the waters of the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays swimmable and fishable. As we here at Waterkeepers work to protect and maintain the ability of the public to safely enjoy the waters of our State, we are also in support of ensuring efficient maintenance of our roadways and sidewalks, as well as advocating for alternatives to road salt that are less harmful to communities and our overall environment. The snowfall that is regularly expected within our region has already begun to fall and will be expected to recur in the month of February. Whether it be children traveling to and from school, people traveling overnight, or firetrucks and ambulances, the Maryland Department of the Environment establishing a Salt Applicator Certification Program provides a standard to better protect all Marylanders.

Waterkeepers Chesapeake supports Senate Bill 0246 and its expressed requirements. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, “road salt can contaminate drinking water, kill or endanger wildlife, increase soil erosion, and damage private and public property.” The EPA has found that the corrosive effect of road salt affects cars, trucks, bridges, and roads resulting in approximately \$5 billion dollars in annual repairs in the U.S. alone. To make matters worse, “road salt can also infiltrate nearby surface and ground waters and can contaminate drinking water reservoirs and wells.” We strongly believe that establishing a standard as SB 0246 would provide helps further the goal of keeping Marylanders safe throughout yet another snowy winter. Therefore, we believe these requirements would properly be carried out under the **Salt Applicator Certification Program** in order to establish practices to safely regulate the harmful overapplication of road salt and more importantly, establish **less harmful alternatives to road salt**.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB0246.

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Waterkeepers Chesapeake