



## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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March 2, 2010

The Honorable Joan Carter Conway, Chair  
Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill 775: Environment – Road Salt Management Program

Dear Senator Conway and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide some information regarding SB 775 Environment – Road Salt Management Program. This Bill proposes to require the State Highway Administration (SHA) and each local jurisdiction that is responsible for highway maintenance to establish and implement a best practices road salt management program by October 31, 2011. The Department of the Environment is responsible for review and comment of these programs. Although MDE shares the concerns of the adverse effects that road salt can have on the environment, and understands the need for public safety during winter weather of our roadway systems, the Department lacks the necessary resources to assess and evaluate road salt management programs from SHA and each local jurisdiction.

Salt can have serious effects on the environment, such as excess salt can saturate and destroy a soil's natural structure and result in more erosion and sediment transport to the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays; high concentrations of salt can damage and kill vegetation; salt poses the greatest danger to fresh water ecosystems and fish; excess salt can seep into groundwater and runoff into reservoirs affecting the taste of drinking water as well as causing potential health hazards (e.g., exacerbate hypertension); and salt is corrosive and can damage exposed rebar, bridges, and automobiles.

The Department is willing to work with SHA, local jurisdictions, and other relevant stakeholders to discuss this issue and how it can be addressed with existing resources.

Thank you allowing us to provide information on Senate Bill 686. If you have any questions regarding this issue, please do not hesitate to contact me at 410-260-6301 or [lnissley@mde.state.md.us](mailto:lnissley@mde.state.md.us).

Sincerely,

Lisa Nissley

Cc: The Honorable Rona E. Kramer  
Jay Sakai, Director, Water Management Administration

