



**CONSERVATION  
MINNESOTA**

February 16, 2023

Chair Hawj and Members of the Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee,

**We write today to ask for your support of SF 755 (Morrison), establishing a voluntary certification and liability protection for sustainable salt application in Minnesota.**

At Conservation Minnesota, our mission is to protect the people and the places that Minnesotans love. Protecting our cherished lakes, rivers, and water-based ecosystems is a vital part of this goal. For too long, our waters have been threatened by chloride pollution driven by the overuse of de-icing salt. We need a legislative solution that allows Minnesotans to reduce their salt use without risking potential liability, and SF 755 (Morrison) provides that solution.

As noted by the University of Minnesota and the Pollution Control Agency, hundreds of thousands of tons of de-icing salt are applied in just the Twin Cities Metro each year, with 78% eventually transferring to groundwater, lakes, and wetlands. Just one teaspoon of this salt can permanently pollute five gallons of water, with no feasible way to remove the chloride pollution.

Over fifty Minnesota lakes and streams have chloride levels above reasonable standards; and in total, salt has impacted at least 221 river miles, 55 acres of wetlands, and 1,400 acres of lakes. But only a fraction of water bodies has been adequately tested. Although a low level of chloride in water is natural, these elevated and increasing levels of chloride become toxic to aquatic life, killing fish, amphibians, plants, and other organisms.

On land, excessive salting can kill roadside plants, sicken pets, corrode built infrastructure, and deprive soil of nutrients. And in drinking water, chloride pollution can be unhealthy for human consumption. In the Twin Cities Metro alone, 27% of monitoring wells had chloride concentrations above EPA guidelines. Statewide, roughly 90 Minnesota communities show excessive chloride in local wastewater.

Options to remove chloride from water systems are prohibitively expensive, but Minnesota does have a pathway toward limiting chloride pollution across the state. Voluntary smart salting programs can help applicators decrease salt usage by 30-70%. SF 755 expands the use of these programs and protects applicators from potential liability, ensuring that Minnesotans can limit their salt use and fight chloride pollution, without fear of legal action. This is a common-sense, responsible, bipartisan bill that protects Minnesotans *and* their lakes, rivers, and water systems. *We respectfully urge your support.*

Sincerely,

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