



Testimony supporting SF 755 (Morrison)
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Thank you, Chair Hawj, and thank you to the committee for taking a proactive approach to curbing the increasing problem of salt pollution in Minnesota water bodies.

My name is Nadia Alsadi. I am the Water Policy Associate at the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, a nonprofit organization with almost 50 years of experience using law and science to protect Minnesota's environment. MCEA supports SF 755, which takes measured yet significant steps towards addressing this environmental problem caused from the overapplication of salt to sidewalks, parking lots and roadways.

Salt pollution is a problem throughout the state, and particularly in areas with high impervious surface cover. Chlorides from deicers and salts can be a problem with stormwater runoff and can accumulate in lakes, streams, and groundwater. Once chloride has entered a water body, there is no practical way to remove it. Instead, chloride accumulates, preventing natural ecological functions of the system from occurring. This is a problem for all of Minnesota, which currently has 50 chloride impaired water bodies, with 75 more considered at risk of impairment. This bill protects Minnesota water bodies from further salt pollution by providing incentives for salt applicators to receive formal training on Smart Salting procedures.

This bill will help advance public education as it relates to these issues. The Smart Salting training that has been offered and provided through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Fortin Consulting is an effective tool for educating maintenance professionals on smart salting practices. As a previous GreenCorps member with the MPCA, I participated in this training and gained valuable knowledge on practical, safe, and cost-effective ways to reduce salt overuse and subsequent pollution. The Smart Salting training describes the impacts of the overuse of salt on our roadways and sidewalks. It only takes 1 teaspoon of salt to permanently pollute 5 gallons of water. The Smart Salting training also describes how the use of salt on particularly colder days is far less effective, and often useless, in addressing hazardous ice. The training provides information on how more efficient snow management may be more cost effective. Unless we take proactive measures on the front end - by providing education to salt applicators and maintenance professionals - more of Minnesota's prized waters will become irreparably damaged.

In closing, I would like to remind everyone that salt is currently widely overapplied in Minnesota and has detrimental impacts to our precious waterways. It only takes 1 teaspoon of salt to permanently pollute 5 gallons of fresh water. The permanent impact from the overuse of deicing salt is a problem that must be addressed now. I encourage smarter salting practices and appropriate training to address this issue, by moving SF 755 forward. Thank you.