

OSPCC



Water Watchers

Guelph City Council  
September 16/25

Water Watchers  
Ontario Salt Pollution Coalition



Government  
of Canada

## Environment and Natural Resources 2001 Assessment Report of Road Salts

“...it is clear from available information that there is a reasonable probability that road salts may be having an immediate or long-term harmful effect on some Canadian surface water organisms, terrestrial vegetation and wildlife and may also constitute a danger to the environment on which life depends through its impacts on aquatic systems and soils and terrestrial habitats.”

“Thus, road salts that contain inorganic chloride salts should be considered "toxic" under CEPA\* 1999 because of tangible threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage.”

\* Canadian Environmental Protection Act

# WHAT WE ARE DOING ISN'T WORKING

**CTC (Credit Valley-Toronto and Region - Central Lake Ontario)**

**Source Protection**

**Region Discussion Paper, March 2024:**



Quebec/Wyndham

- “It is not expected that current salting policies will have a significant impact in reduction of salt trends.”
- “Risk Management Plans to manage the salt issue do not appear to be having the desired effect & take a great deal of municipal resources.”
- “Until incentive programs that reduce liability.....to ensure safety but consider the environment are enacted, no significant change will occur and sodium & chloride in surface and groundwater will continue to rise”.

# ONTARIO LEADS CANADA IN SALT POLLUTION



Quebec/Wyndham

Ontario is responsible for 2.2 of the 5 million tonnes of salt applied in Canada.

“Overall, Chloride concentrations in the streams monitored increased by approximately 2-fold from the 1960s to [2022]”

“... lakes with the highest Chloride concentrations were commonly situated near urban centres, adjacent to highways, and tended to be in more populated regions of the province.”

# OUR ASK

- 1) Municipalities urge the province of Ontario to work urgently with key stakeholders to **develop limited liability legislation**, including enforceable **contractor training** and a single set of provincially-endorsed **standard Best Management Practices (BMPs)** for snow and ice management; and
- 2) Municipalities urge the province of Ontario to create and fund an **expert stakeholder advisory committee to advise** the province and municipalities on the best courses of action to protect freshwater ecosystems and drinking water from the impacts of salt pollution; and



Claire/Gordon

# OUR ASK

3) Municipalities to **commit to the reduction of the use of road salt** as much as possible **while maintaining safety** on roads, parking lots and sidewalks; and

4) Municipalities to **send accepted resolution** to all municipalities in xxx Region, Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), local MPPs, Conservation Ontario, the Ontario Municipal Water Association, Minister Todd McCarthy (MECP), Attorney General Doug Downey, and Premier Doug Ford.



Speedvale/Silvercreek

# OPPORTUNITY TO REGULATE SNOW AND ICE MANAGEMENT SECTOR IN ONTARIO

- Roughly 40% of salt is applied by private sector on commercial parking lots
- Insurance costs are keeping some out of the sector
- Crisis when Town of Blue Mountains got no bids on tender to clear snow and ice
- Ontario appears keen – but moving slowly – we need your help!



Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association · [Follow](#)

November 3, 2023 · 🌐



Representatives of Landscape Ontario's Snow and Ice Sector Group gathered at Queen's Park in Toronto on October 24 to advocate on behalf of those who keep our roads, sidewalks and parking lots safe each winter.

The day was a success, with Premier Doug Ford and ministries across the board showing support to the cause.

The sector group is asking the provincial government to enact a regulatory framework for snow and ice removal to create safer working conditions, foster a mor... [See more](#)



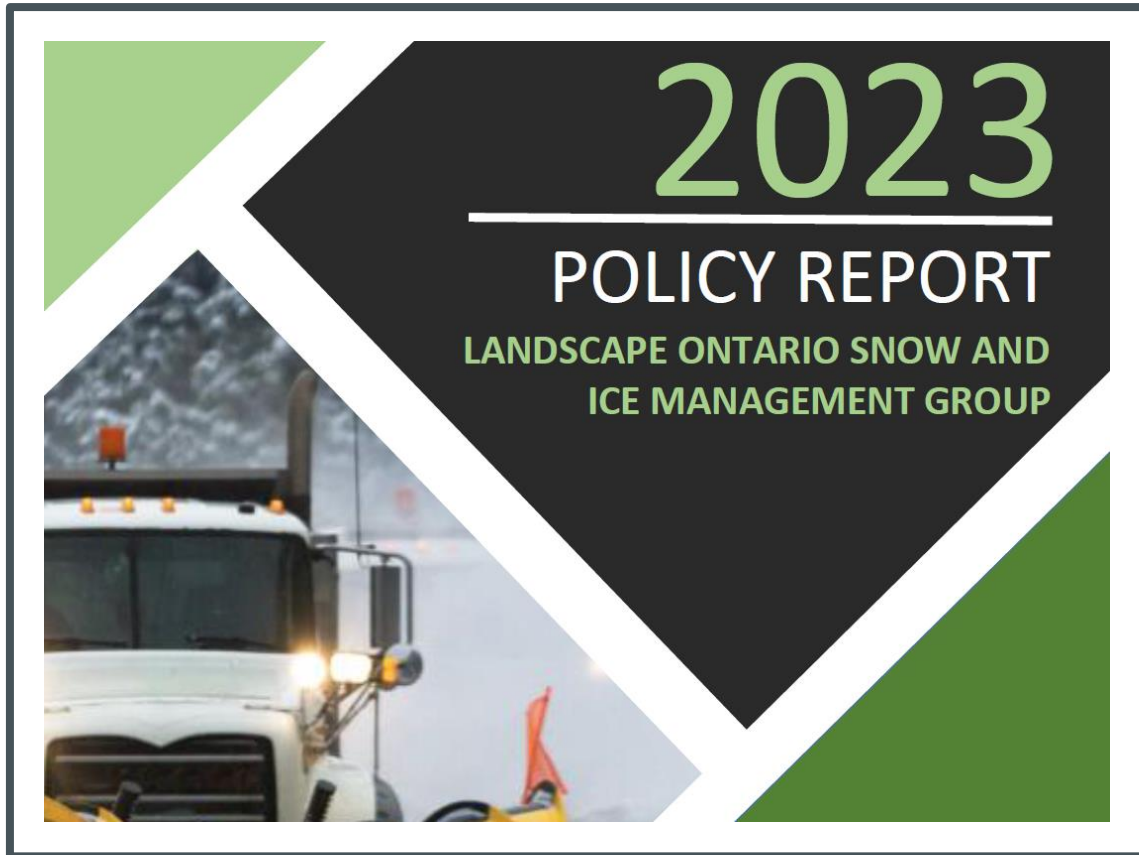
**Successful day  
for snow and ice  
contractors at  
Queen's Park**

landscapeontario.com  
Green for Life!



HORTTRADES.COM

# INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION LANDSCAPE ONTARIO IS ASKING FOR LIMITED LIABILITY



### III. Policy Recommendation

Landscape Ontario wishes to achieve the following goals through legislative reform, the establishment of technical standards, and creation of a regulatory framework:

- Create **safe conditions** for Ontarians while **respecting the natural environment**;
- **Reform the liability system** by balancing risk to all involved in site management in winter;
- Establish a **regulatory framework** for snow and ice management in Ontario;
- Establish the parameters for **defining reasonable risk**.

# Road Salt Impacts



There are impacts to our infrastructure, bridges, roads, building foundations and metal support structures. Impacts as well to our cars, pets, footwear and roadside vegetation.



Stone/Edinburgh

# HIDDEN COSTS

- Public infrastructure
- Fresh water for recreation, swimming, commercial uses
- Freshwater for drinking
- Aquatic life & food chain effects
- Boots and paws
- Cars



# Road Salt Legislation is needed

- There are four primary groups that apply road salt. The first two, the County and the City make informed decisions and are conscious of the impact road salt has on the environment, water resources and infrastructure.
- The other two, private contractors and the public, are totally unregulated. All of the salt that one sees at retail outlets, parking lots or on household driveways goes into the environment. Improperly stored salt, especially as the winter season draws to a close, also poses a concern.



Willow/Imperial

# Road Salt Legislation is needed

- Many of the salt practices that currently exist are the result of fear of litigation. The cost of winter maintenance-related insurance has become so expensive. One company was quoted \$100,000 for a year of insurance coverage! Clearly, this is unsustainable. Indeed, in 2022 no contractors bid on snow clearing work for the Town of Blue Mountains.
- There are no regulations that limit how much road salt should be used, although municipalities voluntarily follow best practices to reduce their usage.



# Taking Action

The [Ontario Salt Pollution Coalition \(OSPC\)](#) and [Landscape Ontario](#) agree a Province wide solution needed:

\* legislative change for the establishment of regulated technical standards and best management practices.

\* legislation to “limit liability” for the applicator and parking lot owner. This approach has been piloted in New Hampshire and has held up in courts.

WMB-24

2020

## Snow and Ice Management for the Business Owner Clean Water and Safe Parking Lots

### Snow and Ice Management Liability Protection in New Hampshire

Under RSA 489-C, *Salt Applicator Certification Option* (effective November 1, 2013), any business owner who contracts for snowplowing and deicing with a “certified” salt applicator has liability protection from damages arising from hazards caused solely by snow or ice. The “certified” applicator is a snow and ice management contractor (contractor) who has undertaken specialized training and demonstrated proficiency with the New Hampshire “Green SnowPro Program” in the most efficient application of road salt (sodium chloride) while ensuring the safety of the traveling public. In addition to providing limited liability protection, hiring a Green SnowPro certified contractor will:

- Increase the efficiency of removing snow and ice while ultimately decreasing the amount of salt that is applied to the parking areas and sidewalks that they manage.
- Save the business owner money through reduced salt use and fewer repair costs associated with damages to infrastructure caused by the caustic nature of salt.
- Reduce impacts to the surrounding environment by protecting groundwater and nearby streams, ponds and lakes from chloride contamination from runoff that originates from parking lots, sidewalks and other areas treated with salt.
- Minimize the salt and sand that is often tracked into lobbies and offices at one’s facility.
- Protect the landscape plantings (such as trees, shrubs and grass) and soil adjacent to parking areas and sidewalks.

As many business owners have already learned, the level of service (how effectively parking areas and walkways can be managed for customer satisfaction) and customer safety *are actually increased* substantially by more efficient salt use and not compromised as once traditionally thought. In our more urban areas, up to 50 percent of the chloride polluting local waterbodies originates from commercial parking lots. Business owners can minimize their cumulative impact on the environment by engaging certified salt applicators and implementing best management practices for salt reduction. Encourage your current snow and ice management contractor to get certified in the New Hampshire [Green SnowPro Program](#).



# Taking Action

This is an issue we can do something about!

We are a groundwater dependant city.  
We can learn from other jurisdictions like New Hampshire and Gatineau, Quebec how to use less salt and still keep people safe.





