

CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

Public Works Committee: July 7, 2025

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR C. CASSAR.....

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR.....

MUNICIPAL RESOLUTION to Support the Need for Provincial Action on Salt Pollution from Road Salt

WHEREAS, road salt is a known toxic substance designated under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act because of tangible threats of serious or irreversible environmental and health damage from road salt;

WHEREAS, salt levels in Ontario’s groundwater aquifers, creeks, rivers, and lakes have increasingly worsened since the 1970s, seriously affecting municipal drinking water sources and aquatic life;

WHEREAS, the Corporation of the City of Hamilton has a Salt Management Plan and a Watershed Strategy to mitigate the impacts of non-point source pollution, the extent of harmful blue-green algae continues to grow in the harbour,

WHEREAS, the Ontario and Canadian governments have taken many actions over the past 25 years including setting water quality guidelines, developing voluntary codes of practice, signing the Canada-Ontario Great Lakes Agreement, and holding workshops, yet still the salt problem continues to grow;

WHEREAS, numerous situation analyses have recommended salt solutions involving liability protection, contractor certification, government-approved Best Management Practices (BMPs) and salt management plans;

WHEREAS, increased numbers of slips and falls claims, and other injury/collision claims related to snow and ice, are resulting in salt applicators overusing salt beyond levels considered best practices;

WHEREAS, unlimited contractor liability is making it difficult or expensive for snow and ice management contractors to obtain insurance coverage, resulting in contractors leaving the business, thereby making it difficult for municipalities and private owners to find contractors;

WHEREAS, the Snow and Ice Management Sector (SMS) of Landscape Ontario is working with the Ontario government to institute a limited liability regime for snow and

ice management, including enforceable contractor training/certification and government approved BMPs for salt application; and

WHEREAS, many Ontario municipalities have Salt Management Plans, but these often require updating in light of improved science and better salt management practices now available.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Corporation of the City of Hamilton urges 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 BMPs for snow and ice management;
- (b) That the Corporation of the City of Hamilton urges 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;
- (c) That the Corporation of the City of Hamilton commits to:
 - (i) a review of the current City of Hamilton Salt Management Plan to assess the amount of salt used relative to existing policy;
 - (ii) the reduction of the use of road salt with a reexamination of the existing plan; and
 - (iii) training winter maintenance staff in Smart About Salt™ protocols while maintaining safety on roads and sidewalks; and
- (d) That this resolution be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), local MPPs, Conservation Ontario, Minister Todd McCarthy (MECP), Attorney General Doug Downey, and Premier Doug Ford.