



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Jon Monger
Director

April 30, 2024

Dear Members of the Friends of Sligo Creek Advocacy Committee,

Thank you for contacting me about your concerns with excessive salt use on the roadways and parking lots in Montgomery County. Montgomery County has over 5,000 lane miles of roads and thousands of parking lots, and it does as much as possible to keep its residents safe. Safety is the County's number one priority during winter weather. That does not mean it has to come to the detriment of our environment, and we greatly appreciate your suggestions on the next steps to better our operations.

The County takes the application of salt for winter weather very seriously. The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (MCDEP) has been working with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and the Montgomery County Department of General Services (MCDGS) for a few years now to utilize the appropriate amount of salt, type of salt, and salting technique. Over that time, the County has made continued progress. The winter of 2023-24 marked the 5th year of the Salt-Wise program, and we have seen positive traction related to public awareness. As you pointed out, this includes the County's salt management plan, which will be revisited. An updated version is due to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) at the end of 2024. We appreciate and encourage the feedback you provided and that of other groups to make the necessary improvements to the plan.

Lowering the chloride levels in our streams and drinking water takes a team effort, and I want to assure you that groups like yours are very important team members. You are our eyes and ears on the ground. Your input helps make the necessary improvements to our operations. In addition to your group's and many others' excellent work, MCDEP has a team dedicated to monitoring waters across the County. The team measures specific conductivity as a surrogate to measure deicing salts directly. The monitoring team collects samples at more than 100 sites they visit in the spring. In the more than 25 years of monitoring in-stream conductivity, the monitoring team has observed a general trend of increasing conductivity. Due to concerns about this increasing trend, Montgomery County has engaged with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Washington Suburban Sanitation Commission, Maryland Department of the Environment, and others to help address this issue.

Montgomery County appreciates the hard work and dedication of the Friends of Sligo Creek and their sister groups. Thank you for the suggestions for consideration in our salt management plan. We



are beginning to update the plan this spring, and as part of that plan, we would like to discuss the suggestions you provided in your letter. Amy Stevens will be reaching out to you to find time to talk about these suggestions and hear what you would like to see included in the County's Salt Management Plan.

Again, thank you for taking the time to both collect the data and provide meaningful suggestions to improve our water quality.

Sincerely,

Jon Monger
Director

Dear Members of the Friends of Sligo Creek Advocacy Committee,

Thank you for contacting me about the salt management plan. I am pleased to hear that you are working on the plan. The County Department of Environmental Protection (MCDPEP) has been working with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and the Montgomery County Department of General Services (MGDS) for a few years now to utilize the appropriate amount of salt, type of salt, and salting technique. Over that time the County has made continued progress. The winter of 2023-24 marked the 5th year of the Salt-Water program, and we have seen positive traction related to public awareness. As you pointed out, this includes the County's salt management plan, which will be revisited. An updated version is due to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) at the end of 2024. We appreciate and encourage the feedback you provided and that of other groups to make the necessary improvements to the plan.

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