

 Corporate Services Department Legislative Services Division	
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January 27, 2026

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**RE: MINIMIZING SALT POLLUTION IN OUR WATERSHEDS WITH LIMITED LIABILITY LEGISLATION**

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Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) has recently joined the chorus of Ontario municipalities and other conservation authorities calling on the Province to introduce limited liability legislation practices and promulgate regulations for salt use in controlling winter snow and ice.

We are writing to you today to encourage your municipality to adopt a resolution of support to develop enforceable and provincially recognized contractor training and certification, and a single set of provincially endorsed standard best management practices for snow and ice management.

Resolutions of support regarding Limited Liability have been passed by 25 municipalities and 3 conservation authorities, including most recently, TRCA ([Ontario Salt Pollution Coalition](#), 2025).

On November 28, 2025, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority’s (TRCA) Board of Directors was pleased to have endorsed adopting Resolution #A 146/25 as follows:

**WHEREAS TRCA has been monitoring water quality in streams, and water bodies including Lake Ontario in the Greater Toronto Area region for decades, including chloride concentrations, which are often associated with winter road salt application;**

**AND WHEREAS our analysis shows that chloride concentrations in TRCA’s watersheds are above Canadian Water Quality Guidelines in many areas and continue to rise, in some cases, to levels lethal to sensitive aquatic life;**

**AND WHEREAS the practice of winter salting for road safety often leads to excessive application due to concerns over liability;**

**AND WHEREAS TRCA with Lake Simcoe and Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) and Ministry of Environment Conservation Parks (MECP) staff and industry stakeholders participated in the Freshwater Roundtable Working Group which identified actions to address excessive chloride application including limited liability protection legislation, training, and certification;**

**AND WHEREAS municipalities, industry and other Conservation Authorities are calling on the Province to address this issue by introducing limited liability protection legislation and promulgating regulations which protects property owners and managers, including municipalities, and government agencies from slip and fall lawsuits if they have taken all reasonable steps to follow Provincial best-management practices;**

**THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT TRCA's Board of Directors request that the Attorney General of Ontario introduce limited liability legislation practices and promulgate regulations for salt use in controlling winter snow and ice;**

**AND FURTHER THAT TRCA's Board of Directors request that the Attorney General of Ontario and the Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks work urgently with key stakeholders including Conservation Authorities to develop enforceable and provincially recognized contractor training and certification, and a single set of provincially endorsed standard best management practices for snow and ice management; and**

**THAT staff be directed to prepare correspondence for distribution to member municipalities outlining the importance of supporting the request for the Attorney General to introduce limited liability legislation practices and promulgate regulations for salt use in controlling winter snow and ice; and**

**THAT member municipalities be encouraged to adopt a resolution of support to develop enforceable and provincially recognized contractor training and certification, and a single set of provincially endorsed standard best management practices for snow and ice management.**

Chloride concentrations continue to increase in TRCA's watersheds primarily due to the use of winter salt on roads, sidewalks and parking lots. Although the need for salt in winter for both driver and pedestrian safety is warranted, important considerations are required to ensure it is used properly.

Salt eventually travels into our streams, groundwater and waterbodies leading to lethal consequences for numerous species, contaminated groundwater and soils, altered lake mixing releasing phosphorus, and costly infrastructure damage, among others. Decreasing the amount of winter salt use is therefore critical to the health of our environment, protecting urban infrastructure, and reducing operational costs.


A barrier to the reduction of salt application for parking lots and walkways is the concern over liability. Businesses in the winter maintenance sector are seeing insurance and legal costs escalate. Deductibles can be \$25,000+ for a single slip and fall claim. Insurance premiums have become so costly that many contractors have left the industry. As a result, some property owners recently have been unable to find winter maintenance contractors. To those still working in the industry, higher liability insurance costs lead many to 'over-salt' properties they manage to be more risk adverse.

To manage this legal barrier, municipalities, conservation authorities, NGOs and other invested private businesses are promoting the use of a '[Limited Liability Framework](#)'. This policy approach would shift some of the liability onus off winter maintenance professionals during slip and fall lawsuits if they can provide a written record of work conducted and proof of certification noting their recognized training under a provincially recognized program.

This limited liability framework has already been put into practice in New Hampshire (NH) and has been since 2013. The NH model recognizes the Canadian Smart About Salt Council's (SASC) guidelines for their coursework training and has been successfully defended in the [State's higher courts](#). This policy tool is a proven and implementable solution at the provincial level to directly address the problems discussed above.

We encourage your municipality to adopt a similar resolution. TRCA staff can assist with preparing resolutions or consider adapting the draft municipal resolution provided in attachment 1 (from the Ontario Salt Pollution Coalition – OSPC).

Sincerely,

  
  
Joanne Hyde  
Clerk and Manager, Policy

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Attachment 1: Draft Municipal Resolution

Attachment 2: [Report on Minimizing Salt Pollution in our Watersheds with Limited Liability Legislation](#)

Attachment 3: [Presentation Slide Deck](#)