Dear Representative/Senator **[your rep’s name],**

Every winter, snowy weather creates dangerous conditions on our roads. Since the 1940s, communities across the U.S. have been spreading road salt on streets, sidewalks and parking lots to melt ice and create safer traveling conditions. Road salt is effective when used correctly, but we have fallen into a pattern of over-applying and misusing road salt in ways that have damaging side effects on wildlife, human health and the environment. I am asking that you work towards salt reduction in **[the name of your community/state]**.

Road salt inevitably ends up in our streams, rivers and lakes. USGS monitored 30 streams from 1960-2011 in Wisconsin, Illinois, Colorado, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Texas and the District of Columbia and found that 84 percent of those streams experienced high chloride concentrations due to road salt. And once road salt enters bodies of water, it is extremely difficult and expensive to remove; it’s simply not feasible to filter it out at water treatment plants.

Road salt threatens our water quality in multiple ways, by contaminating drinking water, corroding pipes and leaching metals into our water. High levels of chloride are dangerous to human health, especially for people with pre-existing conditions such as high blood pressure. Chloride is also toxic to aquatic life and can degrade vegetation and soil. All told, our current road salt practices cost the U.S. $16-19 billion a year in damages.

It’s possible to reduce salt usage without endangering travelers; some communities are already doing it. Minnesota, for example, has substantially reduced salt usage without seeing any loss of safety on the roads. They’ve accomplished this through strategies including training salt applicators in smarter salting practices, offering a smart-salting certification to professional applicators and private property owners, drafting model contracts between applicators and owners (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/smart-salting-training>), and requiring applicators and manufacturers to properly store salt supplies.

**[Your community/state]** can take these steps too. By supporting smarter salting practices, you will be protecting water quality for generations of **[Marylanders/Iowans/etc.]** to come. Please **[insert specific action you want legislator to take: introduce a bill requiring smarter salting practices, co-sponsor an existing bill, etc.]**.

Sincerely,

**[Signature]**

**[Your name]**