

2020 Memorandum in Support

Bill: A8767 by Assembly member Jones, S6824 by Senator Little

Title: An act to establish the Adirondack road salt reduction task force, pilot plan and test program.

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) Strongly Supports this Legislation.

This bill addresses pollution stemming from excessive road salt application on state roads, which poses an unacceptable risk to public health and the environment in our Adirondack Park. Although safe travel on roadways must be a top priority, winter road management practices on our state roads must be amended to ensure not just the safety of the traveling public, but also the quality of our water and the health of residents living along state roadways.

Excessive road salt application leaches into surface and ground water, and releases heavy metals and other toxic substances into drinking water supplies, harming the aquatic life in our lakes and rivers, killing trees and plants along roadways, and threatening the welfare of children and their family members. High salinity in groundwater can contribute to high blood pressure and hyperchloremia in humans, and destroy plumbing and appliances in households. This bill will help to protect our waterways and drinking water supplies, and avert unnecessary health risks to our wildlife, wild lands, our families and communities.

This legislation will create a task force that will make recommendations regarding state road winter maintenance practices in the Adirondack Park to remediate salt contamination of surface and ground waters. The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that roads are safe, but that clean drinking water is preserved for homeowners. The Adirondack Road Salt Task Force recommendations for updated levels of service, best management practices, and road salt reduction targets shall guide the Departments of Transportation, Health, and Environmental Conservation in measurably reducing sodium and chloride levels in both surface and ground waters.

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