



# MEMBER MOTION

## Section 5.4.4(b) of Procedure By-law

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| <b>Meeting:</b>       | Committee of the Whole Meeting                                 |
| <b>Meeting Date:</b>  | July 2, 2025   |
| <b>Subject/Title:</b> | Support for Provincial Action on Salt Pollution from Road Salt |
| <b>Submitted by:</b>  | Councillor Carol Davidson                                      |

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

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; and

Whereas the City of Richmond Hill is home to ecologically significant kettle lakes and headwater streams on the Oak Ridges Moraine, including Lake Wilcox, Bond Lake, Phillips Lake, Lake St. George, as well as the headwaters of the Humber River and Don River, all of which are highly vulnerable to chloride contamination from road salt; and

Whereas scientific studies show that Lake Wilcox has seen a fourfold increase in salt levels from 1996 to 2018, mainly due to road salt washing into the lake, which is harming water quality, upsetting the lake's natural balance; and

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; and

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

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; and

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; and

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 road authorities that use salt, such as the City of Richmond Hill, must abide by, and benefit from, established provincial regulations around snow clearing and maintenance, whereas private contractors only have voluntary programs for salt use for private and commercial property management; and

Whereas the City of Richmond Hill's 2015 Salt Management Plan implemented best practices such as RWIS (Road Weather Information System) monitoring, brining, pre-wetting, GPS calibration, and staff training, but further action is needed to protect Richmond Hill's sensitive freshwater ecosystems and maintain leadership in salt reduction innovation.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved That:

1. The City of Richmond Hill 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.
2. The City of Richmond Hill 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.
3. The City of Richmond Hill commits to the reduction of the use of road salt as much as possible while maintaining safety on roads, parking lots and sidewalks.
4. That a copy of this resolution be sent to:
  - a) all municipalities in York Region;
  - b) The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO);
  - c) MPP Daisy Wai;
  - d) MPP Michael Parsa;
  - e) Conservation Ontario;
  - f) The Ontario Municipal Water Association;
  - g) The Ontario Salt Pollution Coalition;
  - h) Hon. Todd McCarthy Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks;

- i) Hon. Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario
- j) Premier Doug Ford

Moved by: Councillor Davidson

Seconded by: