

Item	Motion re: To Support the need for Provincial Action on Salt Pollution from Road Salt
Mover	Councillor Hamilton
Seconder	Councillor

Recommendation

Whereas road salt is a known toxic substance designated under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act because of tangible threats of serious or irreversible environmental and health damage from road salt; 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 Cambridge is situated on the Grand River and Speed River, and is currently engaged in a ‘Back to the Rivers’ plan to revitalize our waterfront areas to maximize the commercial, recreational, and environmental potential and health of the rivers; and

Whereas the Grand River is recognized as a designated Heritage River and is also the source of 20 percent of our city’s drinking water, while being rich in biodiversity with a variety of fish species such as pike, smallmouth bass, and carp, and with over 300 species of birds calling its banks home or migrating through them; and

Whereas approximately 43,000 tonnes of salt are used on the roads of Waterloo Region annually, costing the Region \$3.8 million; 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 many Ontario municipalities have Salt Management Plans, but these often require updating in light of improved science and better salt management practices now available; and

Whereas the City of Cambridge has demonstrated initiative in salt mitigation efforts, including: the development and actuation of Salt Management practices that outlines best practices in relation to the City of Cambridge and Region of Waterloo; the use of computerized salt spreaders; the pre-wetting of salt, as well as reducing application rates of salt when appropriate; limiting use of salt on low traffic volume roads, and salting only roads and parking lots used in winter while strategically omitting roads and parking lots used only for summer activities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT the City of Cambridge 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;

AND THAT the City of Cambridge 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;

AND THAT The City of Cambridge urges the province to develop a province-wide public awareness campaign on appropriate winter maintenance methods for residential properties, sidewalks, parking lots, and other private spaces, aimed at reducing salt usage by increasing knowledge of winter safety practices, environmental hazards, and social expectations;

AND THAT the City of Cambridge commits to reviewing municipal by-laws related to snow removal to further support salt reduction, wherever possible;

AND FURTHER THAT this resolution be sent to all municipalities in Waterloo Region, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), local MPPs, Conservation Ontario, Minister Todd McCarthy (MECP), Attorney General Doug Downey, and Premier Doug Ford.