

**Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Environment Committee Meeting**  
**Sustainable Salting**

Feb. 15, 2022, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Location: Zoom (Please register with the link that was sent to Committee members.)

Join us for a conversation to explore the potential for municipalities to optimize their winter management and set plans in place to practice sensible salting.

Rock salt is used by every public and private entity responsible for winter maintenance of roads and parking areas in the Midwest. While relatively cheap and effective under most conditions, the product has a number of negatives. When used inappropriately or excessively, it attacks our built infrastructure and vehicles, it damages vegetation, and it degrades our drinking and surface water. The increased concentration of chloride (the active ingredient of rock salt) has led to a rise in regulations, and enforcement with legal obligations is being written into area stormwater and wastewater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. High year-round concentrations have made it difficult and sometimes impossible to achieve the core conditions of the federal Clean Water Act.

[Winter salting management protocols](#) and technology have also undergone a revolution in the last few decades. Improved weather forecasting, understanding of chloride chemistry, and application technology have given snow-fighting entities significant capability to increase their efficiency. Fully optimizing winter operations requires more than improved technology; public officials must develop clear guidance to their snow-fighting teams on expectations for winter maintenance.

The goal of this guidance is to [apply the appropriate amount of rock salt](#) to roads, depending on conditions, and on the desired end goal. The desired end goal, or level of service, is a winter maintenance decision that should be driven by public officials. In good practice, levels of service vary on different road segments, depending on factors like traffic level, emergency routing, and school bus routes. From the chloride management perspective, [level of service](#) is critically important because a higher level of service (cleaner roads) will require a greater use of chlorides. The level of service should be set to ensure sustainable safety and mobility in keeping with resident expectations, while also protecting our surface and ground water.

Stephen McCracken of the [DuPage River Salt Creek Workgroup](#), Wilf Nixon of the [Professional Snowfighters Association](#), and other experts will join us for this timely discussion.

[GRC](#) Goal and Strategy: Protect and improve water quality, W9c: Use sensible salting strategies to reduce chloride contamination

[Climate Action Plan](#) objectives: Manage water and waste sustainably. Sustain ecosystems. Adapt operations and investments for future climate conditions.