



Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization
jtpm.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: HB 2017

Dear Committee Members:

This letter expresses the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District's (EMSWCD's) concern with Sections 136 and 137 of HB 2017. The EMSWCD is unit of local government, led by an elected board of five directors, serving Multnomah County east of the Willamette River. We work with land owners, land managers, and others residents on a voluntary and non-regulatory basis to help them care for land and water.

Sections 136 and 137 of HB 2017 state that under certain weather conditions, the state and large cities will be required to salt a certain percentage of roads. The bill does not specify which type of salt will be used. De-icing salts of all kinds have been demonstrated to have a range of negative environmental impacts. These include increased levels of chloride in groundwater, streams, and rivers; reduced survival of crustaceans, amphibians, fish, and plants; reduced nutrient cycling in ponds and lakes; dehydration and damage to vegetation as far as 650 feet off the road; spread of salt-tolerant invasive species; long term impairments to soil health; and a potential increase in car-wildlife collisions from salt-seeking wildlife.

Given the above, in the best interest of Portland's land and water, EMSWCD recommends that:

1. Salting be optional rather than required;
2. Salting be considered only after more preferable alternatives have been explored;
3. The least environmentally impacting and most effective salt is used when it is used; and
4. Salt only be applied in conjunction with other hazard-mitigation methods.

Please let me know if you would like further information

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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