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## 2022 Legislative Memorandum

### SUPPORT: S6322-A/A4067-A (Harckham/Abinanti)

**Riverkeeper strongly supports this legislation** creating a road salt task force for the East-of-Hudson New York City watershed, and starting a pilot program to explore practices that reduce salt contamination while maintaining winter road safety.

Road salt application is critical to public safety in the winter months in the East-of-Hudson New York City drinking watershed and across New York. However, the application of salt has led to negative ecological effects on water quality and ecology.

Chloride levels from road salt threaten the viability and safety of residents and communities that rely on wells for their drinking water supplies. And increased chloride levels in waterways may lead to reproductive impairment for aquatic organisms and inhibit the growth of subaquatic vegetation necessary for healthy ecosystems.

The Hudson Valley's Cary Institute for Ecosystem Studies has conducted extensive research on the negative effects of road salt application to water quality across New York State. They've determined that new technology and management practices are critical in addressing this growing crisis.<sup>1</sup> Riverkeeper supports any effort to reduce road salt inputs into the New York City drinking watershed.

#### **This legislation will:**

- create a task force charged with offering recommendations for best practices and levels of service to reduce road salt contamination of waterways and groundwater while maintaining road safety
- establish baseline scientific monitoring of road salt pollution to inform the task force and for the design of future pilot programs
- allow for NYS DOT to use recommendations from the task force in various pilot programs to test the efficacy of recommendations to meet both goals of the task force.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.caryinstitute.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report\\_road\\_salt.pdf](https://www.caryinstitute.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report_road_salt.pdf)

For these reasons, Riverkeeper strongly supports this legislation to address the growing challenge of road salt contamination in the East-of-Hudson watershed while maintaining road safety.