



Legislation Text

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Resolution from the Environmental Commission to City Council regarding reducing the use of Salt
In response to a request from City Council, the Environmental Commission is recommending that the city seek to reduce the use of salt by residents in response to recommendations from the Pedestrian Safety and Access Task Force

Prepared by Matthew Naud, Environmental Coordinator

Whereas, On November 18, 2013 City Council passed Resolution R-13-367, which established a Pedestrian Safety and Access Task Force of nine members to explore strategies to improve pedestrian safety and access in the City of Ann Arbor and make recommendations to be considered in the subsequent development of a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan.

Whereas, the Task Force identified seven behaviors as important issues including the following:
Snow and Ice Accumulation on Sidewalks and Crosswalks Inhibiting pedestrian Travel. A single un-cleared property, ramp, crosswalk or crossing island can make an entire route impassable, place pedestrians in danger or inhibit pedestrian travel altogether.

Whereas, the Task Force has made recommendations that are likely to increase the use of de-icing compounds on city sidewalks;

Whereas, City Council has asked the Environmental Commission to identify any environmental concerns with these recommendations;

Whereas, Property owners and/or occupants are responsible for removing/treating snow and ice on the adjacent public sidewalk and sidewalks must also be treated with sand, salt or other substance to prevent it from becoming slippery.

Whereas, Beginning the first week of December, the city provides residents and/or property owners with one, five-gallon bucket's worth of sand and salt mixture, per visit at the maintenance yard located at 721 N. Main.

Whereas, the Environmental Commission recognizes the safety benefits from keeping sidewalks free of ice;

Whereas, the Environmental Commission recognizes the environmental harm from salt use increasing the salinity of waterways and aquifers and sand entering the stormwater system;

Whereas, some deicers can be less environmentally harmful than salt (sodium chloride) for keeping heavy traffic areas safe and magnesium chloride is a good choice as it is much less toxic to plant life and less corrosive to concrete and steel (and other iron alloys) than sodium chloride;

Resolved, the Environmental Commission recommends that the City Council develop and provide

annual resources to reduce the use of salt for all deicing activities in the city by supporting a winter education program that integrates the best available information from the Huron River Watershed Council and other sources that supports the Pedestrian Safety Task Force recommendations and minimizes the potentially harmful effects of de-icing compounds on the environment;

Resolved, the Environmental Commission recommends that City Council explore bulk purchasing or providing rebates or other incentives to support municipal, business, and resident purchases of environmentally preferable deicing compounds.