

**Resolution to Decrease the Amount of Rock Salt Used by Increasing  
Education and  
Implementing Salt Brine Application to Mitigate Environmental Impacts**

WHEREAS, overuse of rock salt for application on roads is increasing environmental issues in water quality in streams and lakes, soil quality in ditches which then negatively affects the health of exposed organisms; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin is one of the highest users of rock salt for road application, with 40% of winter cost to Wisconsin Department of Transportation being associated with purchasing rock salt; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF) is to educate the public on environmental issues as well as protect our state's natural resources, and the overuse of rock salt is a threat to soil, stream, and lake ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, the short-term effects of rock salt runoff attracts halophilic, or salt dependent, wildlife increasing road-kill and vehicle collisions and the loss of salt sensitive species of native plants such as wild flowers which are essential to keeping pollinator populations at stable levels; and

WHEREAS, the long terms effects of rock salt runoff decreases aquatic diversity by allowing salt tolerant invasive species to take over as well as decreasing groundwater quality for decades; and

WHEREAS, salt runs off into water bodies creating a higher water density that will settle to the deepest part. This can disturb the natural cycle of seasonal water turnover, which prevents nutrients in water's lower layers from reaching the water bodies upper layers, disabling the support of life for essential aquatic microorganisms that feed game fish species; and

WHEREAS, the general education of salt application drivers decreased the amount of rock salt applied in Brown County by 10%; and

WHEREAS, in Jefferson County, on a five-year average, rock salt application to their roadways decreased by 52.9%, saving \$427,496 in rock salt purchases while still being effective in traffic and roadway safety; and

WHEREAS, because Wisconsin imports all salt used on roadways from Canada; all money used to buy salt leaves the state. Because less salt is needed for brine, Wisconsin will need to buy less salt, which leaves more money in Wisconsin's economy and reduces the costs to taxpayers; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, supports increased education of salt brine application for roads to the public, local units of government, and salt applicators therefore gaining political and monetary support for counties to implement brine application strategies; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation encourages state funding towards the research of the effects of salt on surface water, groundwater, and soil quality near roadways.

Submitted by the Wisconsin Conservation Leadership Corps,

Cheyenne Carlin  
Kari Pollard  
Nate Weisenbeck

Advisor: Mike Piacenti, Operations Manager Brown County Highway Department