



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **NVCA Calls on Province to Act with Pro-Business Reforms to Prevent Rising Salt Pollution Threatening Local Waterways**

UTOPIA, Ontario (July 4, 2025) – The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) is calling on the Ontario government to take common-sense, pro-business action to address the rising threat of chloride pollution in local rivers and streams, which has increased by more than 300% in parts of the watershed since the 1970s.

In a formal letter (enclosed) sent this week to the Honourable Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, NVCA Board Chair Jonathan Scott asked the province to introduce limited-liability protections for certified snow and ice contractors who follow best practices, and to strike a provincial advisory committee to guide long-term salt reduction strategies.

"Local municipalities and conservation authorities have made significant investments in salt reduction," said Chair Scott. "For instance, my own municipality of Bradford West Gwillimbury is investing over \$2 million in a snow filtration facility to help remove contaminants before they enter our watershed. Nonetheless, we continue to see rising chloride levels, especially from private properties, due to fears around liability and a lack of consistent standards, which leads to oversalting parking lots. We need the province to step in and provide pro-business reforms to help solve this problem."

Excessive road salt in winter maintenance has become one of the fastest-growing pollutants in Ontario's urban watersheds. When salt dissolves, it breaks down into chloride, which can accumulate in groundwater, harm aquatic ecosystems and increase corrosion in infrastructure. In the Nottawasaga Watershed, without a change to reduce road salt use, these elevated levels will exceed federal water quality guidelines, and pose serious risks to aquatic ecosystems, drinking and agricultural water sources, and long-term watershed health.

At its most recent meeting, the NVCA Board unanimously passed a resolution highlighting this growing concern and encouraging a provincial response with a limited-liability framework.

"Salt reduction isn't about compromising safety; it's about smarter, more affordable, pro-business practices," said Scott. "Other jurisdictions like New Hampshire have proven that you can protect both the public and the environment, with their limited-liability approach reducing salt pollution by as much as 40%. Ontario can lead the way too."

NVCA is committed to working collaboratively with the province, municipalities, industry, and environmental partners to develop effective, evidence-based solutions that protect watershed health.

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**About NVCA:** The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is a public agency dedicated to the preservation of a healthy environment through specialized programs to protect, conserve and enhance our water, wetlands, forests and lands.

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