



State of Connecticut

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STATE CAPITOL

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Transportation Committee
Public Testimony
Friday, February 28, 2014

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 5288 AN ACT CONCERNING CHEMICAL ROAD TREATMENTS.

Dear Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, Senator Boucher, Representative Scribner and esteemed members of the Transportation Committee,

I wanted to take this opportunity to testify before you today on the deep concern I have regarding the use of chemicals on our roadways.

I recognize the frustration by local municipalities and DOT workers that residents anticipate almost perfect driving conditions during a winter storm. I have been told by my local leaders that they actually receive calls from residents demanding clear passible roads and they are irate at any slight inconvenience regarding transportation. This is unfortunate, as the pressures of immediate clean roads are pushing our public works departments to dispense more and more chemicals onto our roadways and bridges causing significant damage. I am just as concerned about our environment. Run off into storm drains have led to increasing salinity in our waterways. Yet, no one has demonstrated the exact consequences for our reliance on these chemicals. This bill would do that.

I have read with interest of a growing movement to use beet juice on roadways which has been used in Canada and Pennsylvania. There are other alternatives as well and I would ask for them to be piloted in certain locations. We must find reasonable solutions that do not harm those who drive vehicles with faulty brake lines, use bridges which are deteriorating from rust and corrosion, and who eat freshwater fish caught in polluted streams or lakes.

I urge you to vote on this bill and send it to the General Assembly for action in this short session.

Best Regards,

Melissa Ziobron
State Representative
34th District

13 Jan 2014 4:39 PM

Canadian town is using beet juice to de-ice the roads

By Jess Zimmerman



Elizabeth

What's weirder — or at least less pungent — than de-icing roads with cheese brine, like they do in some Wisconsin counties? How about doing the same thing using a beet juice-based road treatment, like the British Columbia town of Williams Lake? In fact, even better: Combine the two, and maybe add some traction in the form of walnuts. Tastiest clear roads ever!

Williams Lake, which averages more than 75 inches of snow a year, has already put down almost 9,000 gallons of beet juice. The town hopes this will be a cost-saving measure, because unlike sand, the beet juice doesn't have to be cleaned up when the season is over.

In an attempt to better deal with the snow and ice that builds up on the roads, and to cut down on the use of salt and sand, Williams Lake in December began to experiment with Beet 55, a slightly sticky mix of sugar-beet juice and saline. It's brown and doesn't stain.

"We put down 33,000 litres just before Christmas," Mr. Goldfuss said Thursday. "I'm really pleased with the difference so far."

I've met a beet, and I'm not sure I believe it doesn't stain. But the important part is that unlike the cheese brine, which reportedly smells about how you'd expect (i.e. like funky cheese), the beet juice solution smells "like a Tootsie roll," according to the city's director of municipal resources. That alone sounds like a reason to switch over from sand and salt.

Source

- B.C. town uses beet juice on snowy roads, Toronto Globe & Mail

Jess Zimmerman is the editor of Grist List.

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Four Foods That Help Prevent Slippery Roads

February 22, 2014; 3:09 AM

Government agencies in the United States spend \$2.3 billion every year to battle winter weather conditions, according to a study sponsored by the New York State Department of Transportation.

While effective to 16 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, the traditional application of rock salt to maintain roadways has negative environmental impacts.

@OHMPA tweeted: "Beet juice, cheese brine & garlic salt prove to be as effective as road salt & may induce pizza cravings"

Additional Relevant Tweets and Social Media Reaction



See larger image below.

A study conducted by Marquette University concluded that using rock salt (sodium chloride) presents problems when the chloride is absorbed by the ground and water streams.

In response to these concerns and for their responsibility to keep roads safe for more than 135 million motor vehicles registered in the United States, transportation departments continue to investigate and implement new, sometimes unusual, strategies for winter weather.

Unconventional sources of salt brines, such as pickle juice, beet juice, potato and cheese byproducts, are decreasing costs, lowering environmental impacts and are effective at temperatures well below zero.

These agricultural-based brines were rated highly by many states surveyed, noting the high ice melting capabilities and the overall safety impacts on wintry roads.

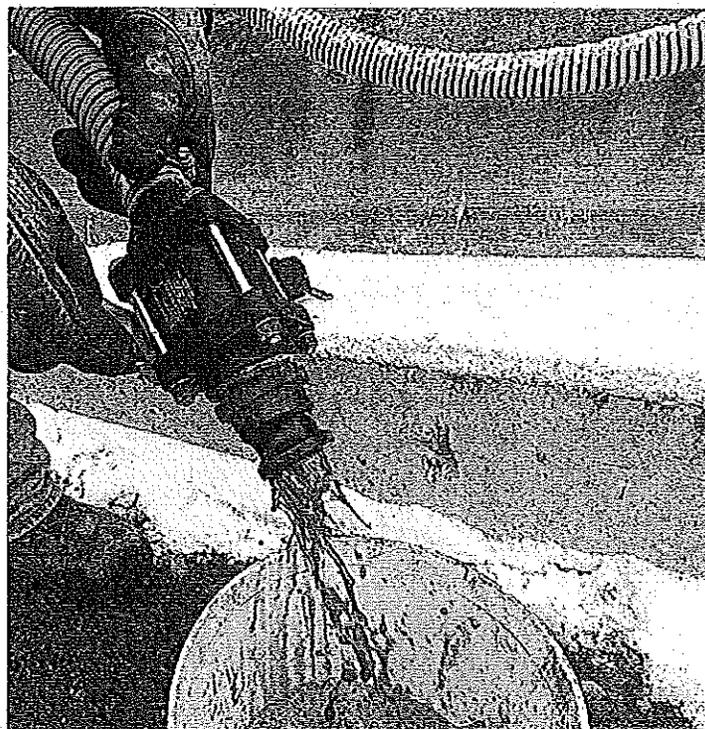
AccuWeather.com spoke with several transportation department officials about their seemingly off-beat solutions for winter weather conditions.

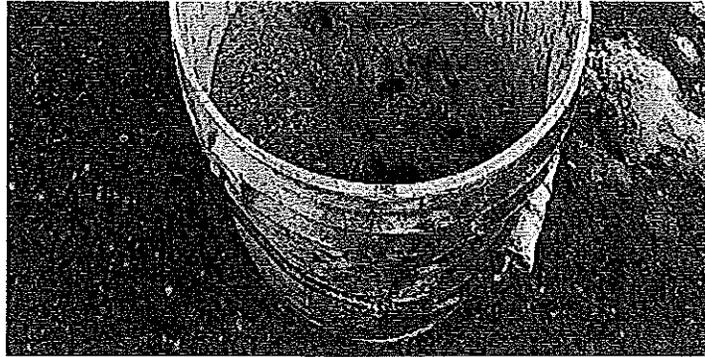
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In a demonstration, a bucket is filled with beet juice at the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Butler, Pa., maintenance facility, Monday, Jan. 6, 2014. Because rock salt is largely ineffective below 16 degrees, road salt is mixed with additives, such as beet juice and cheese brine, to keep it working in temperatures as low as 25 degrees below zero. (AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar)

Beet Juice

As an agricultural byproduct created through the sugar beet process, beet juice brine is a useful tool for many highway departments.

PennDOT District 10 uses "Beet Heet," which Deborah L. Schreckengost Casadel, public information officer for PennDOT, describes as "an anti-icing and salt pre-wetting agent made from processed sugar beet molasses."

When combined with the traditional de-icing agent of salt, the thick red beet juice freezes at a lower temperature than just a pure salt brine, so it can be used in below-zero temperatures. It also provides additional adhesive powers for the brine, which allows the roadway to retain more even after rainfall.

Beet Heet has provided positive results for PennDOT, as they test the product on Route 422 in Butler County, Pa. They are currently evaluating the performance and cost effectiveness of these methods, in the hopes to enact a more widespread application.

This beet solution is also being used in Indiana, Ohio and Tennessee.

Casadel said, "PennDOT continually evaluates new materials and technology to provide cost effective tools to reach our goal of providing safe, passable roadways and bridges for the traveling public."

Pickles

In light of the brutal winter and dwindling salt supplies, New Jersey has implemented a larger-scale use of pickle brine on roadways.

When pickle brine is applied, it acts similarly to rock salt and lowers the freezing point of liquid on the road to 6 degrees below zero Fahrenheit.

Consumers can also experiment with the use of pickle brine by applying the pickling liquid that is included with commercial pickles. Spraying the liquid on walkways and driveways will have the same effect as municipal applications on roadways.

Cheese

Brines are being created from cheese in a predictable place - Wisconsin. The state, already famous for its cheese, is implementing the use of salty cheese by-products to treat their roadways.

Although it was first used in the state of Washington, Wisconsin was a logical testing ground for this new brine.

"The brine is simply a salt bath used in the final manufacturing process. The cheese brine was a waste product that the dairy had to pay \$25,000 annually to have treated off site," said Steve Warndahl, a highway commissioner in Polk County, Wis.

The cheese brine can be used in temperatures as low as minus 21 degrees, which is much lower than solid rock salt which is ineffective at minus 15 degrees Fahrenheit.

"This works well for us and at cost savings to our taxpayers," Warndahl said.

Potatoes

In Tennessee, a brine solution containing potato juice, commercially named Magic Salt, is helping to keep roadways open and clear during winter. A byproduct of the distillation of vodka, it was discovered in Hungary that the mixture did not freeze in low temperatures.

Jerry Hatcher, maintenance director for the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), said "That's when someone realized it could be used as a de-icing agent."

The potato juice is mixed with a traditional salt brine at varying ratios depending on the temperatures and weather conditions. "We also use it to treat when we've already got snow or ice on the ground, to help [salt brines] work at a lower temperature," Hatcher said.

Although temperatures in Tennessee do not reach this threshold, the potato juice is also effective in temperatures well below zero.

The potato juice is more environmentally friendly than rock salt. Hatcher said, "[Agricultural brines] are friendly to the environment because they have reduced corrosive effects."

He continued, "In Tennessee, these [agricultural brines] are going to continue to be used and experimented, to see what's more effective for us at different temperatures. It's still pretty early on for us, but we know that we will continue to use these and find the solution that's most cost effective going forward."

Clearing snow and ice from roadways is of the utmost importance to provide the highest level of safety for travelers. Unconventionality aside, these innovative brines are lowering costs, lessening environmental impacts and providing safer roads.

Experimenting with solutions beyond traditional rock salt and even salt brines will prove to have a tremendous impact on road safety, environmental concerns and cost savings.

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Se(ternative (to road salt): pickle brine, cheese curd, cheese brine, beet juice, and garlic salt.
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Feb 21

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Gary Finger · Houghton College

do the food brines attract more animals, such as deer, to the road? might be a negative to what seems a good idea.

Reply · 3 · Like · Follow Post · January 24 at 9:58am



McPhee Barbara · Henry Ford Community College

First Thing That Comes To Mind With Beets Is The Red Stains It Leaves Behind.

Reply · 2 · Like · Follow Post · January 24 at 11:23am



William Steinbrunner · Coldwater, Ohio

Sugar beets aren't red. That's why the brine is brown.

Reply · 1 · Like · January 26 at 7:56am



Cathie Lohocky · Top Commenter

My thoughts exactly, on both the animals and stains- but then I thought that since it is mixed with salt, it would probably not attract the animals. But the stain of the beets- yuk! The potato remedy has the closest color to snow too- who wants to see yukky red blood looking snow?

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January 2, 2014 10:40 PM

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(Photo Credit KDKA)

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David Highfield
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BUTLER (KDKA) — Could something from the garden help PennDOT deal with the snow and cold temperatures on the roads?

In the coming days, PennDOT in Butler County plans on testing a new and improved version of the beet juice they used to help treat the roads a few years ago.

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Bob Skrak, from PennDOT, says salt becomes less effective as the temperature drops below 20 degrees, but the beet juice is supposed to make the salt work better.

"The salt starts to become ineffective as you drop below the 20 degree mark," said Skrak.

He also says that beet juice continues to help even in temperatures below zero.

"It's a beet juice, it has some other chemicals in it," says Skrak of the mixture they'll be testing. "It can go well below zero – maybe 15, 20 below. We're certainly going to test it on the very cold temperatures."

The batch they'll be testing in the next few days has a higher sugar content than the beet juice they tried out a few years ago.

Skrak says the beet juice is a pilot program, and only PennDOT in Butler County is giving it a try.

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