



David C. Kaufman, P.Eng.
General Manager
Transportation Services

Works and Emergency Services
Barry Gutteridge, Commissioner

Toronto City Hall
24th Fl. E., 100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2

Reply: Gary H. Welsh
1530 Markham Road
6th Floor
Scarborough, ON MB 3G4
Tel: (416)396-7842
Fax: (416)396-5681
E-Mail: welsh@city.toronto.ca

March 25, 2004

Mr. Nicholas Vincent
Program Manager
Transportation Association of Canada
2323 St. Laurent Blvd.
Ottawa, ON K1G 4J8

Dear Mr. Vincent:

Re: 2003 TAC Environmental Achievement Award

I would like to nominate the Salt Institute to receive the 2003 Environmental Achievement Award for their efforts to improve salt management practices by road salt users in Canada.

The Salt Institute has been proactive in working with Environment Canada, TAC, and public agencies to provide knowledge and direction to road authorities to make more effective use of road salts. Their initiatives are helping to improve winter road safety, accommodate efficient movement of goods, and at the same time minimizing the negative impacts of road salts to the natural environment.

It is ironic that the Salt Institute is actively trying to get road salt users to use their products, road salts, in a more efficient manner. This will likely result in less of their product being used. The less product used will mean less revenue to the Salt Institute's member companies.

The Salt Institute is a non-profit association of salt producers founded in 1914 and is based in Alexandria, Virginia, U.S.A. The Institute has a "virtual office" in Ottawa and participates fully in TAC. It provides public information and advocates on behalf of its members. Its members in Canada include:

The Canadian Salt Company
Sifto Canada, Inc.
Cargill Salt
N.S.C. Minerals, Inc.

The Salt Institute sponsors engineering and medical research field studies and laboratory investigations on various uses of salt. It provides information to dieticians, animal nutrition professionals, water softener owners, highway safety and maintenance engineers, industry researchers, journalists, elected government policymakers, and regulators.

For over 30 years, the Salt Institute has promoted its Sensible Salting approach which emphasizes getting the most from every application of salt while maintaining the safest roads possible in the most economical way and protecting the environment.

One may question nominating the Salt Institute for an environmental award since its member companies supply a product which is causing environmental concerns because of the large quantities used. However, the Salt Institute has been, for many years, providing information and working with road authorities to better manage the salt that is used, and better management is the key to resolving environmental concerns with use of road salt. Unfortunately, in Canada, not many road authorities including the City of Toronto, put a high enough priority on salt management until Environment Canada expressed concerns with road salts.

On November 30, 2001, Environment Canada recommended road salts be listed under Schedule 1 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA). A final decision has not been made as of the spring 2004. A “Code of Practice for the Environmental Management of Road Salts” has been developed by Environment Canada assisted by a working group comprised by over 70 agencies including the Salt Institute. What became clear when developing the Code of Practice was the issue how to enhance the expertise of road salt users especially users in smaller municipalities. It is common for these municipalities to have limited funds to pay for training courses and buy training materials. Guides such as TAC’s Salt Management Guide are available and various programs have been developed. However, their use by smaller and even larger public agencies had been limited for many years.

The Salt Institute has taken a pro-active approach to make road salt information and training readily available under the following programs:

1. Support customer compliance through production of new training materials. For 32 years, the Salt Institute’s Sensible Salting Program has provided support and curriculum materials for their customers to train their personnel how to apply only the minimum amount of salt to achieve the safety and mobility goals in each agency’s approved level-of-service objectives. They support the TAC Salt Management Guide and encouraged training using that tool. They encouraged successful efforts in Ontario to develop a new 8-module training course, now available from the Ontario Road Salt Management Group. They have encouraged renewed emphasis on training that has had dramatic impacts in British Columbia and Quebec. In addition and specifically, during 2003, they provided financial support and instructors for the following:

- A train-the-trainer seminar for about 30 trainers in New Brunswick conducted by the Salt Institute for members of the Canadian Public Works Association's Atlantic chapter.
- Training in two-day workshops of nearly 200 operators and supervisors from more than 20 (mostly smaller) Ontario cities and counties by instructors of the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) funded by the Salt Institute.
- Training of nearly 1,400 operators and supervisors from nine (larger) Ontario agencies as a result of train-the-trainer workshops conducted by OGRA with funding support from the Salt Institute.
- A commitment to TAC to develop a new *Learning Guide* in 2004 to train operators and supervisors to upgrade their respective salt management practices to conform to the new Code of Practice. The Salt Institute's commitment leveraged a funding commitment that will allow TAC to provide workshops using the new *Learning Guide*.

In 2004, their plans include the following:

- Provide OGRA a grant to conduct at least 22 training workshops for operators and supervisors.
 - Provide OGRA a grant to conduct training workshops for 15 larger agencies.
 - Provide TAC a grant to develop a 6-module *Learning Guide* that will be completed and distributed free on the TAC website beginning this summer.
 - The Salt Institute has encouraged TAC to conduct train-the-trainer workshops (generally outside of Ontario where this task has been contracted to OGRA) using its new *Learning Guide*.
 - The Salt Institute has published a 27-page booklet on *Highway Salt and Our Environment*, available in both French and English. The publication raises awareness of the need for proper salt management to ensure environmental protection.
 - For many years, the Salt Institute has had a program to promote sound customer salt storage, following the guidelines in the Institute's *Salt Storage Handbook*. This year, the Institute has commenced an Excellence in Storage awards program in Canada to offer recognition for agencies doing an exceptional job in storing road salt. Storage is the primary avenue for environmental insult through mismanagement.
2. Ensure Salt Institute Guidelines and salt industry operating practices comply with the new Code of Practice. They have completed a review of the Institute's Voluntary Guidelines for Distribution Stockpiles, put in place a self-audit mechanism to encourage their consistent application both by member companies and contract stockpile operators they employ and have promoted training for stockpile management personnel.

3. Participate in development of the Environment Canada Code of Practice. The Salt Institute and its four member companies have attended all “stakeholders” meetings to develop the proposed Code of Practice. They have submitted formal comments and their representatives were among the most energetically engaged members of the Road Salts Working Group. The Salt Institute made one of its major objectives a strong training emphasis to implement the new Code.
4. Participate in future updates to the TAC *Syntheses of Best Practices*. In the late 1990s, the Salt Institute participated, as a member of the Transportation Association of Canada, in TAC’s development of a valuable salt management tool, TAC’s *Salt Management Guide* and its accompanying and more detailed Codes of Practice. These were augmented and updated to become TAC’s *Syntheses of Best Practices* and incorporated by reference into Environment Canada’s new Code of Practice. The Salt Institute helped fund this activity and participated extensively in the editorial review.
5. Publishing a quarterly newsletter called “Salt & Highway De-icing. The Salt Institute has published this newsletter which provided information of existing best management practices for winter de-icing operations and stories to assist road salt users to more effectively use road salts. This newsletter is sent to most road salt users in Canada as well as distributed throughout the world.
6. Development of a website for road salt users. The Salt Institute has a website www.saltinstitute.org/snowfighting/ dedicated to providing information on road salts. Information relating to training, best practices, and risk management is very extensive and is provided free of charge. All the information a road authority needs to implement their own best practices is contained on this website such as TAC’s Primer for Snow and Ice Control.

It is very infrequent to see an organization like the Salt Institute assist its customers in using their products more efficiently. The leadership shown by the Salt Institute to develop new practices and new training programs is, in my opinion, the leadership Environment Canada was hoping for when the road salt issue was being reviewed. The Salt Institute could have just as easily promoted the use of road salt by emphasizing the more salt used, the safer winter driving conditions will be. Fortunately for road authorities, the public, and environmentalists, the Salt Institute chose to help lead to a solution knowing that less of their product will be used in the future.

I trust you will give the nomination of the TAC 2003 Environmental Achievement Award to the Salt Institute serious consideration.

Gary H. Welsh
Director
Transportation Services, District 4

GHW:ef