



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **EVERS CHOOSES TRIAL LAWYERS OVER CLEAN WATER, SMALL BUSINESSES**

*Vetoes measure promoting voluntary salting strategies to keep our roads and drinking water safe*

MADISON, WI... Governor Evers today chose trial lawyers over clean water and small businesses by vetoing legislation promoting voluntary incentives and strategies for reducing the impacts of road salt on Wisconsin's lakes, streams and drinking water.

State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere), co-author of the proposal with State Rep. Elijah Behnke, said the measure, though broadly supported by environmental and small business groups, was rejected by the Democrats' big trial lawyer campaign donors.

"At the committee hearings, we heard that fear of slip-and-fall lawsuits are the biggest reason for over salting," Sen. Jacque said. "His veto shows the Governor cares less about clean water, and more about his campaign funders having someone to sue."

The Jacque-Behnke proposal provided a voluntary pathway to limited liability for de-icing applicators who attain certification through state-endorsed training, policies adopted by the state of New Hampshire in 2013, followed by Illinois and Colorado. Minnesota also has a state certification program and has proposed similar liability protections in recent legislative sessions.

"Implementing best practices and maintaining records of their work would give applicators limited liability from lawsuits, as would the businesses that hire them," Rep. Behnke said. "But Governor Evers instead sided with trial lawyers despite increasing concern for the growing impact of road salt accumulating in our precious freshwater."

Sen. Jacque said that under the bill ([Senate Bill 52](#)), the state would have established criteria for the training and maintained a list of acceptable trainings, as well as certified commercial applicators, without collecting any new state fees. Business owners could also minimize their cumulative impact on the environment by hiring commercial applicators with current certification in de-icer training.

"Unfortunately, trial lawyers could not stomach the idea of protecting a small business trying to do the right thing by protecting our freshwater resources," Sen. Jacque said. "That's one less target they can shakedown for cash in a frivolous lawsuit, so they put the veto pen in the Governor's hand."

"This legislation was developed through extensive consultation with state government leaders and Wisconsin Salt Wise, a coalition of organizations from across Wisconsin," Rep. Behnke said. "It's a shame Governor Evers put trial lawyers before clean water and our environment."