



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 379 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator Roger Victory
Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure

CONTENT

The bill would amend Public Act 51 of 1951, the Michigan Transportation Fund law, to do the following:

- Require the Department of Transportation to implement a pilot program on the use of organic additives to control ice on public roads, highways, and bridges in the State to reduce the application of salt and chemicals contributing to deterioration and pollution.
- Require the Department to submit a report on the pilot program to members of the House of Representatives and Senate committees with jurisdiction over transportation by December 31, 2022.

Proposed MCL 247.661a

Legislative Analyst: Tyler VanHuyse

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have a minor, negative fiscal impact on the State and no fiscal impact on local units of government. Depending upon the results of the program, the bill could have a substantial, long-term, positive fiscal impact on the State and local units of government.

The bill would require the Department to test the use of organic additives in the salt mixture it uses to control ice on the roads during the winter months. Organic additives, such as GeoMelt®, could reduce the amount of salt needed to combat icy road conditions, reduce salt corrosion on the roadways and on maintenance equipment, and reduce man-hours spent salting roads. Studies have shown that organic additives added to traditional salt mixtures can be extremely efficient and cost-effective at temperatures that are slightly below freezing, but are less efficient and cost-effective in extreme cold, i.e., zero degrees Fahrenheit and below. Any overall cost savings would depend on the severity of the winter months during which it was applied.

There would be some upfront costs. Organic additives are relatively inexpensive, between \$12 to \$15 dollars per ton. Much of the cost in using an organic additive comes from the process of mixing it with salt. Correct application of an organic additive generally includes the addition of several gallons of the mixture per ton of salt and the mixing of the two substances with a special machine that evenly distributes the additive. Organically treated salt should be stored separately from untreated salt. The mixture also should be applied to roads as a preventative measure, before the temperature drops below freezing, in addition to treatment during snow storms and while plowing. Depending upon the number of road miles used for the pilot program, total upfront costs could range between \$25,000 and \$50,000.

Date Completed: 9-6-19

Fiscal Analyst: Michael Siracuse

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Bill Analysis @ www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa

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