



# Landscape Ontario

## HORTICULTURAL TRADES ASSOCIATION

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Industry calls for structural reforms to address Ontario's road salt supply crisis

**MILTON, Ont. — Feb. 24, 2026 —** Ontario is facing a critical road salt supply crisis despite being home to one of the largest underground salt reserves in the world. Private snow and ice management contractors who are responsible for maintaining hospitals, long-term care homes, logistics hubs, retail centres and commercial properties are raising the alarm over the severe difficulty securing reliable supply and unprecedented price volatility.

The cost of salt has escalated from roughly \$100 per tonne to as much as \$400 per tonne, while most contractors remain locked into fixed-price seasonal contracts with clients and cannot adjust their pricing. Under Ontario's *Occupiers' Liability Act*, contractors must maintain safe premises conditions regardless of material availability. Ontario's contractors have been struggling with skyrocketing insurance costs; now the massive increase in salt prices threatens to put many of them out of business.

"This is not a salt shortage. It is a supply chain failure, compounded by a liability framework that inflates demand and concentrates risk in the private sector," said Joe Salemi, executive director of Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association (Landscape Ontario). "Contractor insolvencies, service interruptions and heightened public safety risks are inevitable without targeted policy intervention."

Landscape Ontario is advocating for urgent reforms needed to stabilize supply, protect public safety and prevent contractor insolvencies, in response to the following key drivers:

#### **1. No emergency allocation framework**

Ontario lacks a provincial mechanism to ensure transparent allocation reporting and domestic supply stabilization during declared winter emergencies.

#### **2. Logistics bottlenecks**

Distribution—not production—is the chokepoint. When marine routes close due to freezing, a single vessel carrying 25,000 to 30,000 tonnes must be replaced by up to 1,000 truckloads. Ontario's trucking sector lacks surge capacity, resulting in delays, long queues at mine sites and effective rationing at the distributor level.

### **3. Liability-driven demand pressure**

The current liability framework encourages overapplication of salt to mitigate litigation risk, artificially increasing demand and insurance costs.

Landscape Ontario urges the Ontario government to implement three key reforms:

- Establish a domestic emergency allocation protocol during declared winter emergencies.
- Designate road salt as a “winter safety commodity” to prioritize rail and freight movement during congestion.
- Modernize Occupiers Liability Act to introduce limited liability protection for accredited contractors who follow documented best management practices.

“Winter in Ontario is predictable. The volatility surrounding it should not be,” Salemi said. “We need to work collaboratively with the government to implement balanced, practical reforms that protect public safety and strengthen Ontario’s winter infrastructure.”

### **About Landscape Ontario**

Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association is the province’s premier horticultural trades association, representing approximately 3,000 professional members through regional chapters and sector groups. The association advocates for a strong, sustainable landscape horticulture industry across Ontario.

–30–

### **Media contact:**

Penny Tantakis  
Director of Communications  
Landscape Ontario  
[ptantakis@landscapeontario.com](mailto:ptantakis@landscapeontario.com)