

# End of an Era - Sand/Salt Shed Program on Track for Retirement

## “Priority 3” Municipalities Take Notice!

As the result of the Transportation Committee’s unanimous vote in support of an amended version of LD 1817, *An Act to Amend the Law Concerning the State Cost-share Program for Salt and Sand Storage Facilities*, the 27 year old sand/salt storage facility funding program will be retired on July 1, 2017.

Enacted in 1987, the program was established to provide municipalities with access to state funds to offset the costs of building the storage facilities the Department of Environment Protection deemed necessary to protect drinking water sources from the contamination caused by the location of sand/salt stockpiles. According to the Department of Transportation (DOT), over the course of the program’s history the state has invested \$11 million in the construction of 204 municipal sand/salt facilities.

LD 1817 proposes to close out the funding program by establishing the final and definitive deadlines eligible municipalities are required to meet to receive state aid. The deadlines apply to the filing of the “notice of intent,” the filing of the construction plans and the completion of construction. As proposed, upon receipt of the final notice from the Department of Transportation, a municipality has: (1) two months to notify the Department of its interest in moving forward with the construction of a facility; (2) 12 months to submit its final construction plans to the Department for review; and (3) 24 months to construct and occupy the facility.

The cost to the Department to finally retire the program is estimated at \$4.6 million, \$3 million of which is included as part of the FY 2014-2016 three-year transportation improvement work plan.

The \$3 million incorporated in the Department’s budget includes the \$813,500 owed to 15 communities that have already built facilities, but have not yet received state reimbursement. The \$3 million allocation also assumes that approximately one-half of the 29 communities that are eligible to receive state aid but have not yet built a facility will participate in the

state reimbursement program. However, if all 29 communities respond to the Department’s “last call for reimbursement” notice, then the additional state resources will be secured. In other words, the 29 eligible communities will receive the assistance if municipal officers meet the deadlines established in LD 1817.

With a directive to close out the program by July 1, 2017, it is expected the

Department will begin to contact the 29 remaining eligible communities in late June of this year. Those communities are listed in the sidebar to this article. Municipal officials interested in moving forward with the construction of a storage facility are urged to respond to the Department’s notice in a timely fashion in order to secure funding from this soon-to-be-retired program. It is now, or never.

### Municipalities Eligible for Sand/Salt Facility Construction State Aid

Addison, Amity, Brighton Plt., Canaan, Canton, Charleston, Cutler, Freedom, Grand Isle, Harmony, Hebron, Hodgdon, Industry, Kingsbury Plt., Limerick, Limestone, Livermore, Lovell, Mars Hill, Merrill, New Canada, New Limerick, Newry, Saint Albans, Stow, Vanceboro, Webster Plt., and the unorganized territories of Mayfield Township and Long A Township.

### “Dig Safe” Update (cont’d)

amorphous Dig Safe “participant” status, and that municipalities not be required to sign open-ended Dig Safe membership forms that authorize the Dig Safe Board to subsequently change the rules of the game. MMA’s requests along these lines have thus far been denied.

2. MMA has asked for clean language clarifying that municipal street opening ordinances are valid and may require more from excavators than whatever the Dig Safe standards might require in the way of municipal notification, etc. Thus far, clean language with that clarification has not been forthcoming.

3. Dozens upon dozens of municipalities that would be subject to this law have extremely small amounts of underground utility infrastructure, such as a small community water or wastewater system installed by a private developer in a mobile home park served by a town road. To require those municipalities to be Dig Safe participants, provide 24/7 emergency contact information, along with mapping and marking mandates and mis-marking

penalties, is an extremely heavy-handed legislative initiative.

Municipal officials with input regarding LD 965 as it is currently before the Committee should contact Garrett Corbin at [gcorbin@memun.org](mailto:gcorbin@memun.org) or 1-800-452-8786.

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