

# ODOT will expand use of salt on dangerous winter roads

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Chance of snow? Expect a sprinkling of salt too.

On the first eleven miles of Interstate 5 north of the California border, the average number of winter crashes dropped from 115 to 54 after the state's transportation department started using solid salt on a trial basis.

Because of the apparent success of that pilot program and directives from the Legislature, the state will continue to use salt sparingly on some major roadways this winter.

While it can be difficult to peg the exact cause of crashes, and the figures fluctuate from year to year, officials found that the two areas they tested as part of a pilot program from 2012 to 2017 saw a decline in crashes after they tried salt.

"It was amazing to see," said Dave Thompson, a spokesman



Oregon Department of Transportation

**Test results suggest using salt can reduce weather-related crashes.**

for the Oregon Department of Transportation. "The salt was really effective, and still we wanted to minimize its use."

ODOT will have salt on hand for the first 100 miles of the freeway north of California, on 200 miles of Interstate 84 and in hilly parts of the Portland metro area, as well as a 121-mile stretch of

U.S. 95 in southeastern Oregon between Nevada and Idaho that was tested as part of the pilot program.

Since the 1990s, the state has used a liquid chemical deicer, which isn't always enough to keep snow and ice from bonding to pavement, ODOT says.

The state has largely

avoided solid salt, which can have deleterious environmental effects and is expensive to store. Solid salt has the same chemical composition — sodium chloride — as table salt.

Salt, through road runoff, can make its way into surface water, groundwater and soil, which can make it harder for plants to absorb water. It can also corrode roads, bridges and vehicles more quickly.

But salt can also be very effective, especially in certain conditions, like freezing rain, which the transportation agency says is growing more common in Oregon. Salt will be just one component of the state's winter maintenance plans.

Through the five years of the pilot program, the department wanted to see whether a small amount of salt could improve highway conditions and cut down on serious and fatal crashes.

# Oregon State Treasury pushes gun safety reforms on manufacturers

Associated Press

SALEM — Oregon has joined a coalition of states intent on changing how they invest money in the firearms industry to push gun safety reforms.

The Statesman Journal reports the move by the Oregon State Treasury — which manages the multi-billion-dollar Oregon Public Employees Retirement Fund — reflects an increased level of scrutiny for gun-related manufacturers not just from the halls of Congress, but from low-profile corners of state government that seek to influence how the industry does business.

The coalition's investing principles support universal background checks, safer technology for firearms and training for gun retail employees.

The principles aren't a set of rules that forbid any investment in the industry. Instead, they are a broader framework for investors doing business with companies.

Oregon joins California, Connecticut, Florida, Maine and Maryland in the coalition. In their entirety, member states manage more than \$4.8 trillion, much of it for government retirees.

"As a fiduciary of a large, diversified investment port-

folio, we frequently engage companies and encourage them to operate in ways that increase the odds of strong long-term returns and to reduce future investment risks," Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Read said in a statement. "Without (these gun safety principles) we do not believe the current path is sustainable."

The Oregon pension fund's investment in the firearms and munitions manufacturing sector is a tiny part of the state's overall portfolio — just a fraction of 1 percent. The fund has positions in four companies with a net value that was less than \$7 million in November 2017, when the state last ran a report on its holdings in the firearms sector.

At the time, the fund's total assets were about \$78 billion, Treasury officials said.

Kevin Starrett, director of the Oregon Firearms Federation, said Read's actions are "typical of Oregon and Democrats."

"They think if we don't invest in companies that are firearms-related, we're going to hurt them somehow, but all they do is make their stocks

available to other people like me," Starrett said. "It's what Oregon Democrats are about. It's symbolism and show and amounts to nothing."

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