



# Keep it Fresh: The Salt Watch Community Science Initiative

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Salt Watch Coordinator

Izaak Walton League of America





# Izaak Walton League of America

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*To conserve, restore, and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources, including **soil, air, woods, waters, and wildlife.***



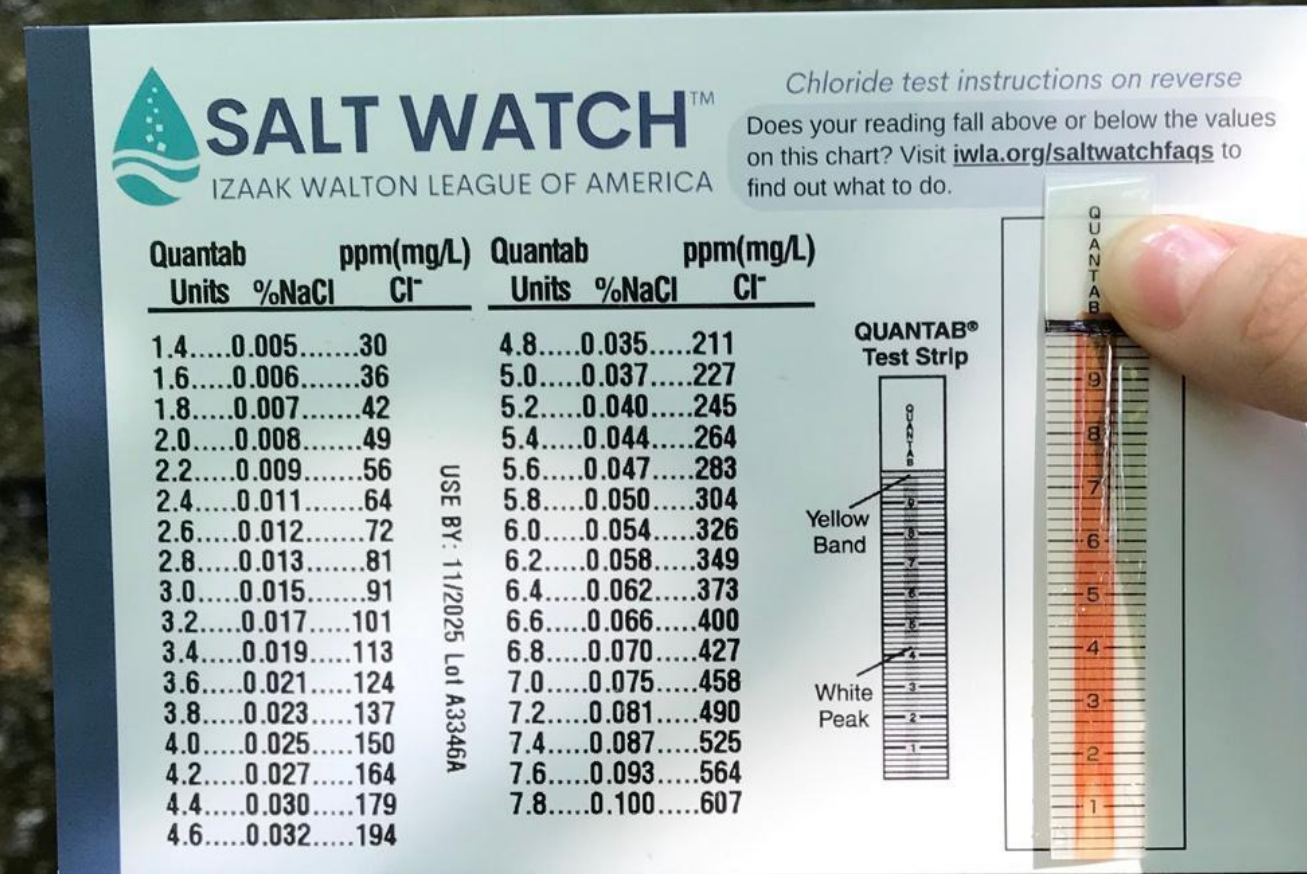




# Salt Watch

SaltWatch.org

- Launched 2018
- Mobilizing community scientists to monitor chloride levels in streams
- **Goals:**
  - **Raise awareness** about the connection between salt and stream health
  - Identify chloride **hot spots** in freshwater
  - Advocate for **smarter application** of road salt







# WHAT IS ROAD/WINTER SALT?

**NaCl - Sodium Chloride**

**KCl -Potassium Chloride**

**MgCl<sub>2</sub>- Magnesium Chloride**

**CaCl<sub>2</sub>- Calcium Chloride**



# HOW IS SALT APPLIED?









It only takes  
**1 teaspoon of salt**



to **permanently pollute**  
5 gallons of water





# IMPACTS



**Wildlife**



**Infrastructure**



**Drinking Water**



**Habitat**

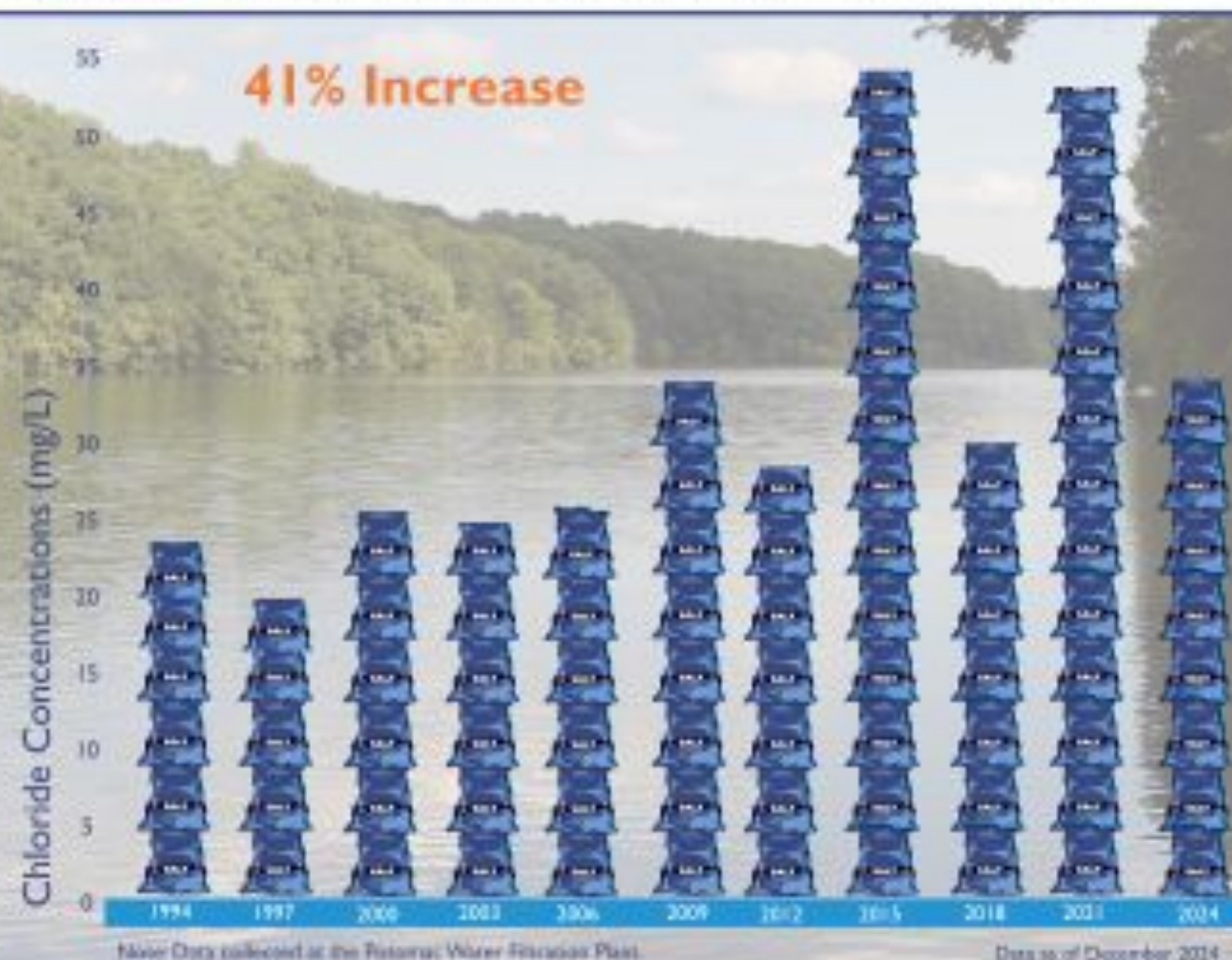


**Pets**





## Increase in Salt (Chloride) in the Potomac River Over the Past 30+ Years



## Increase in Salt (Chloride) in the Patuxent River Over the Past 30+ Years

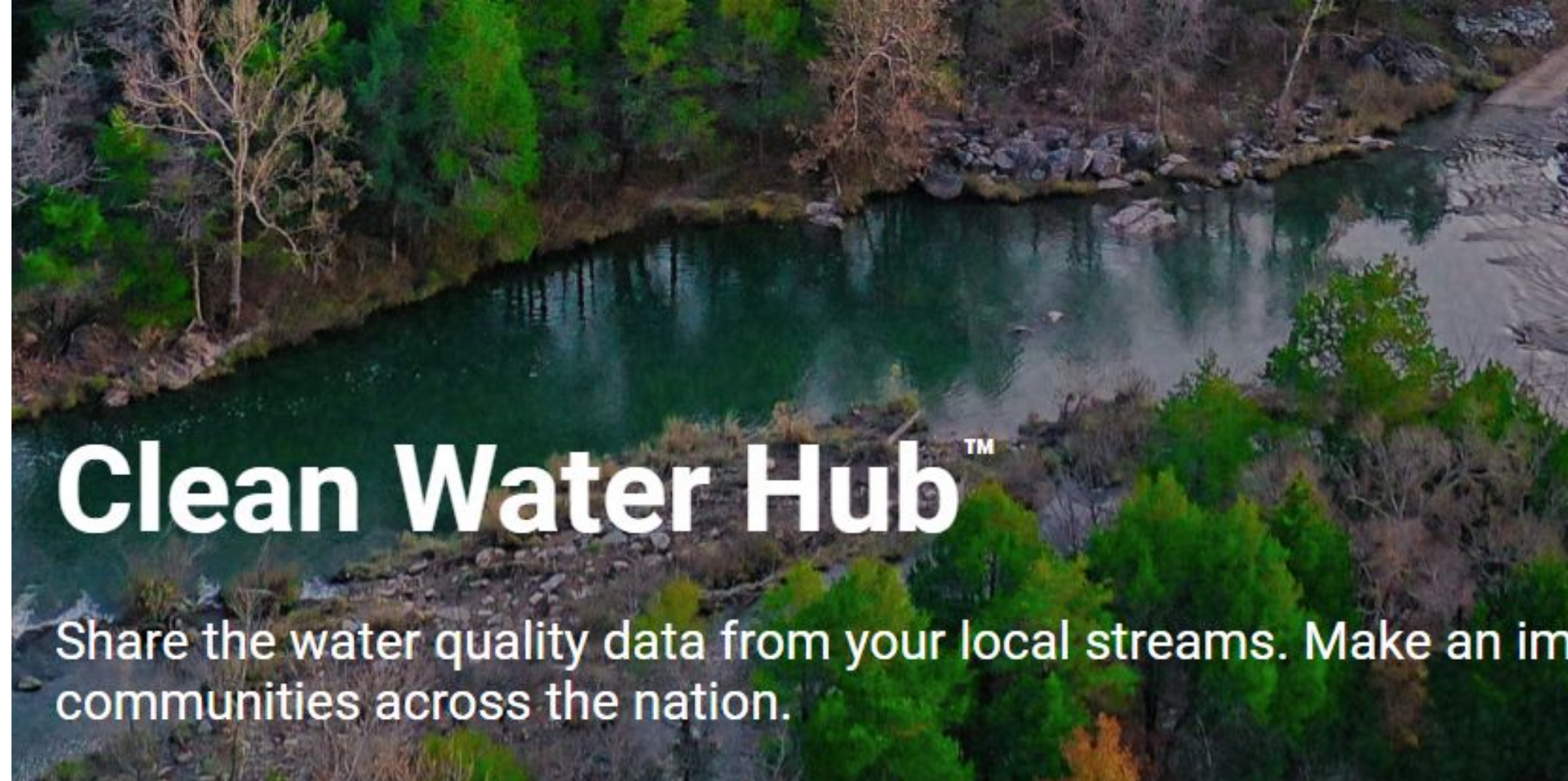




# Clean Water Hub

[www.CleanWaterHub.org](http://www.CleanWaterHub.org)

- National water quality database
- Publicly accessible
- Created with usability in mind
  - Data is meant to be easy to access, understand, and share
- Color-coded, interactive maps



SIGN UP

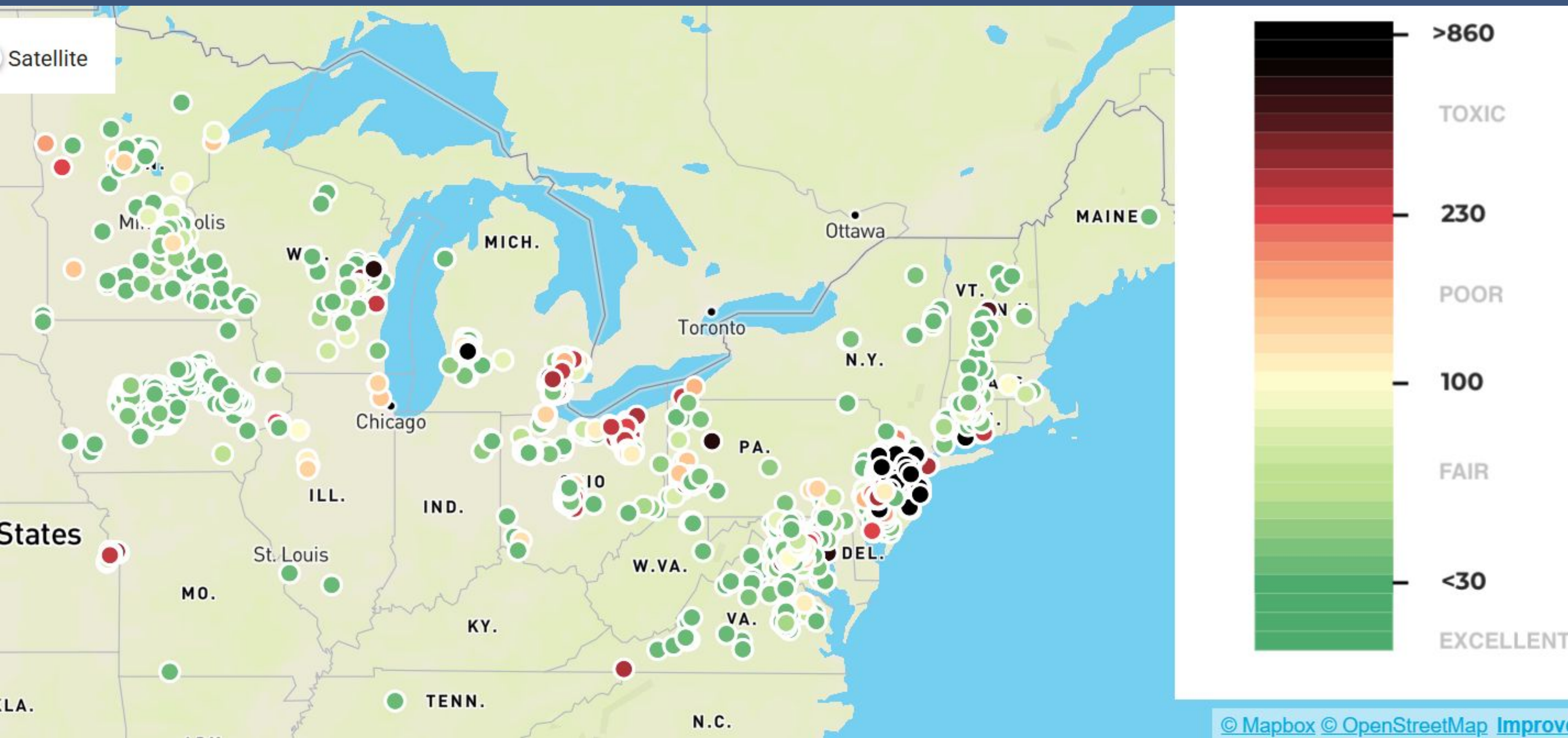
SIGN IN

EXPLORE THE MAP

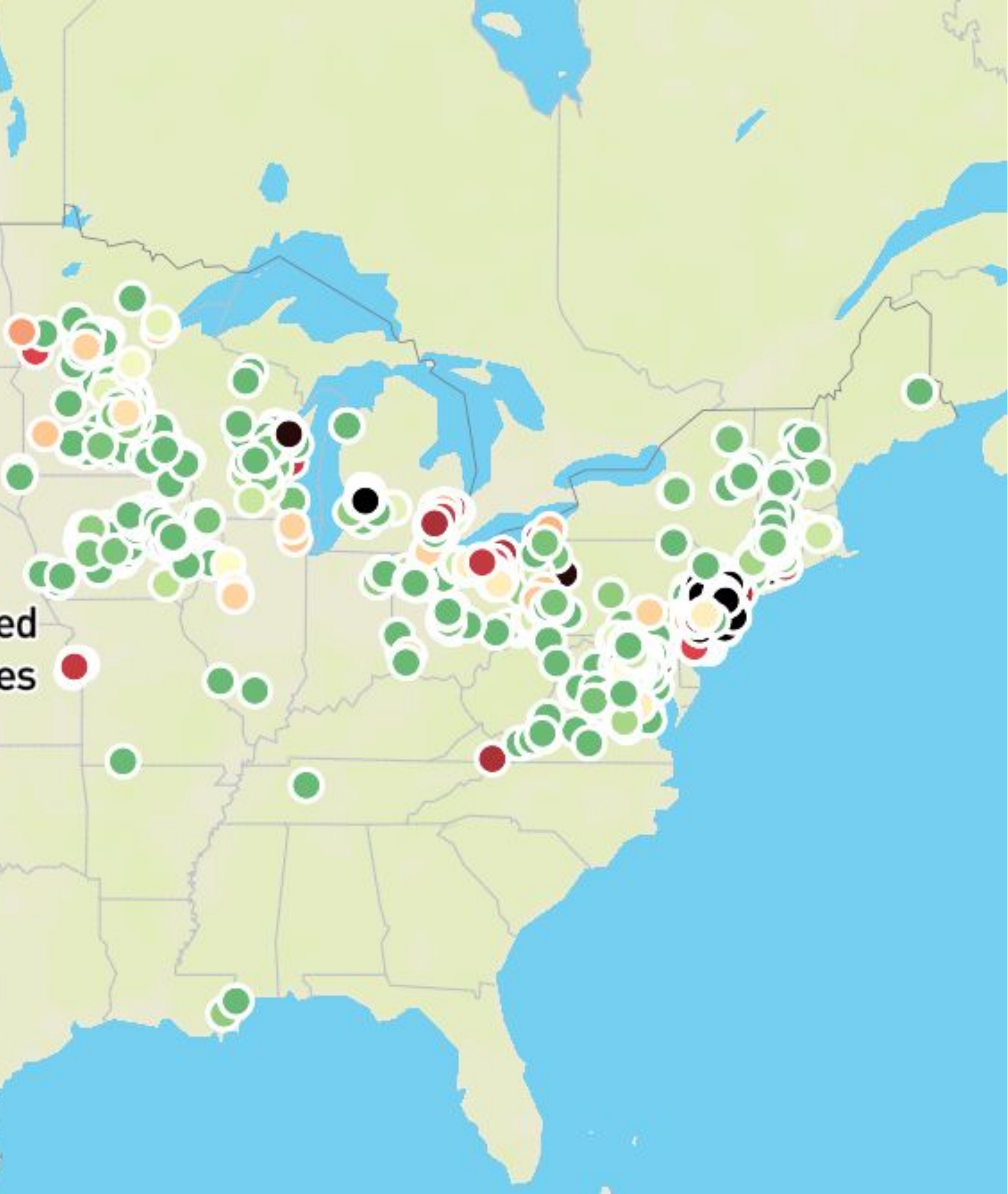




# 2024-2025 National







# 2024-2025 National

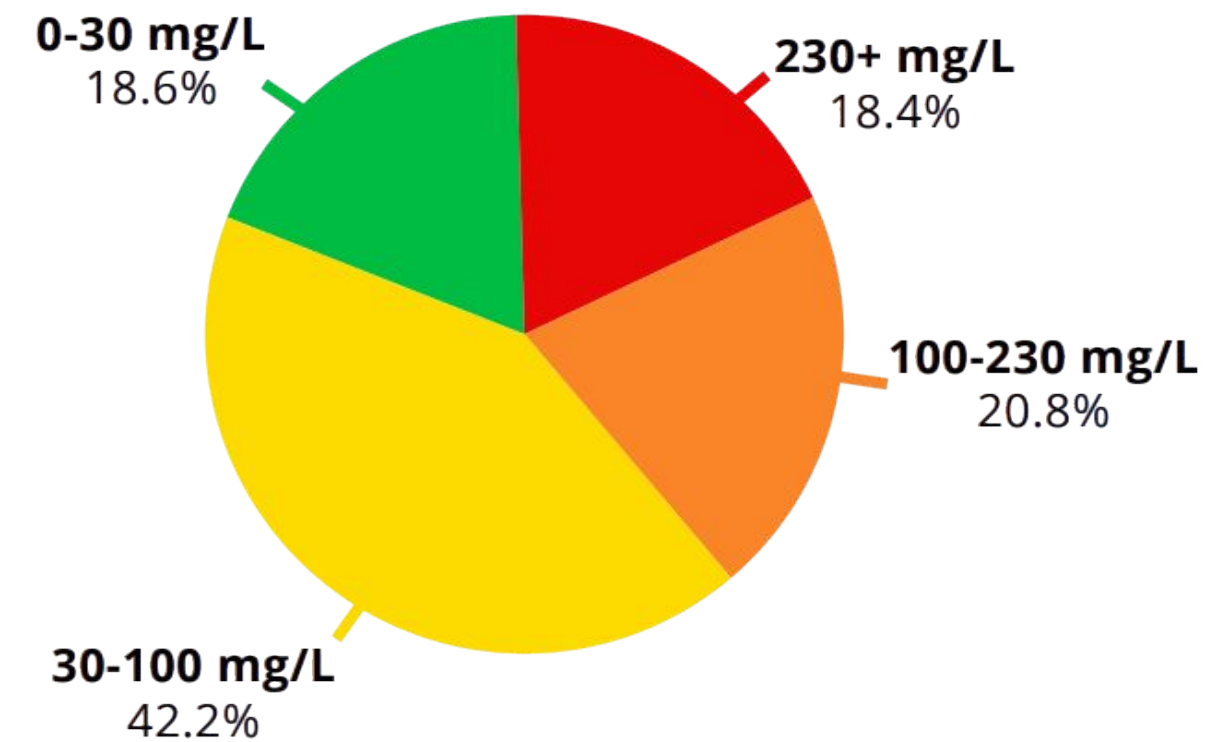
Total chloride readings: **8,689**

● 0-30 mg/L: **1,617**

● 30-100 mg/L: **3,663**

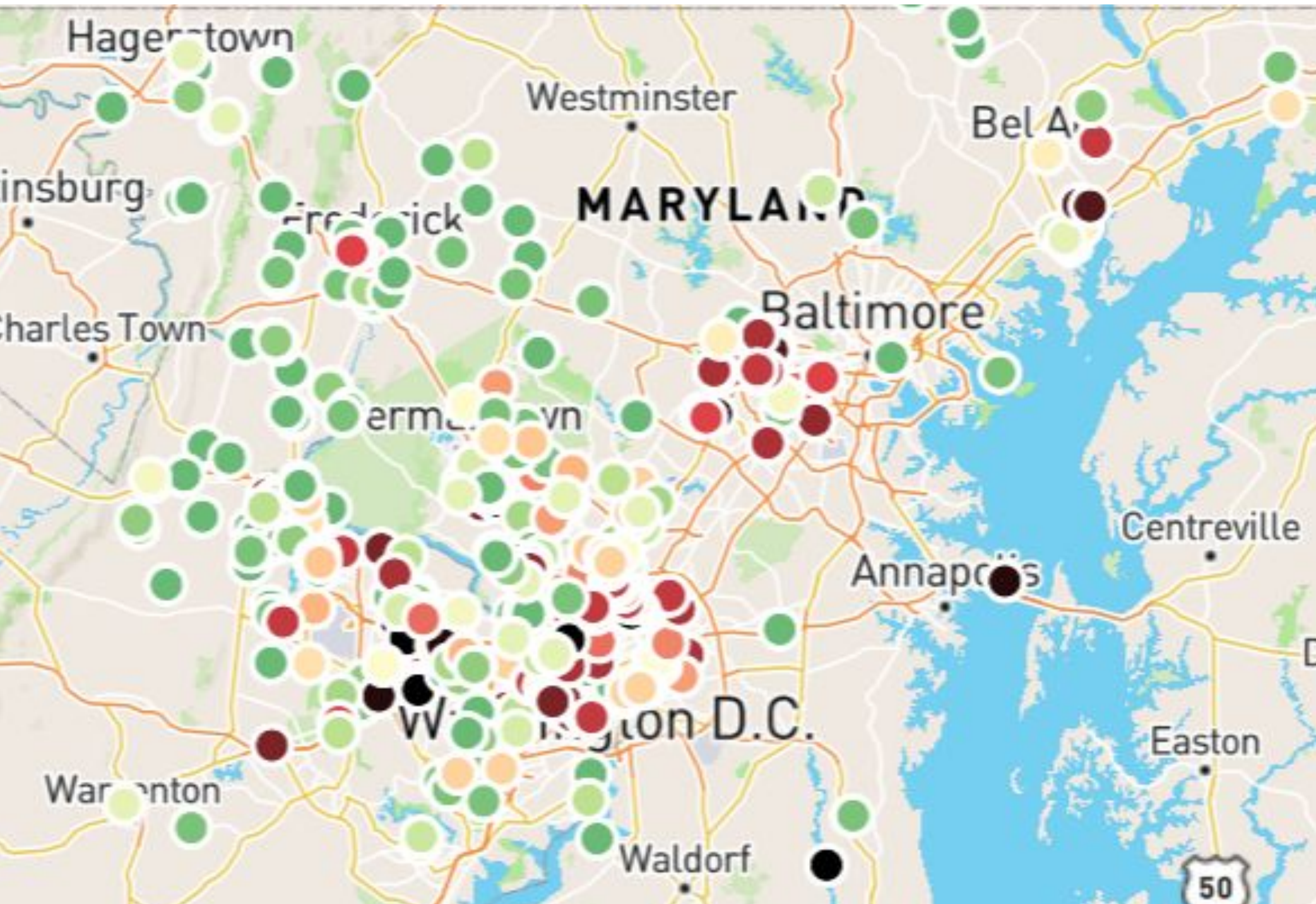
● 100-230 mg/L: **1,811**

● 230+ mg/L: **1,598**





# 2024-2025 Maryland



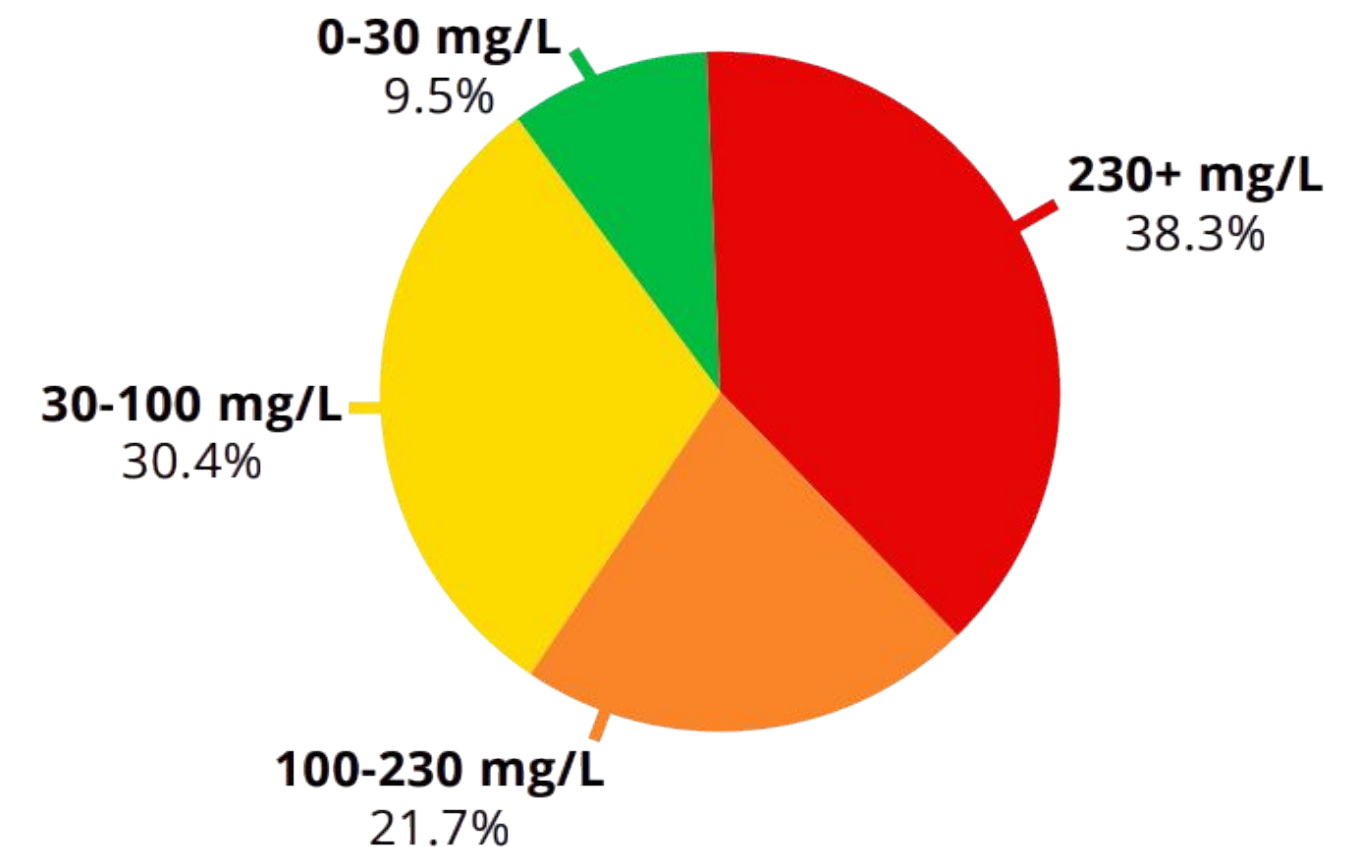
Total chloride readings: **1,437**

● 0-30 mg/L: **137**

● 30-100 mg/L: **437**

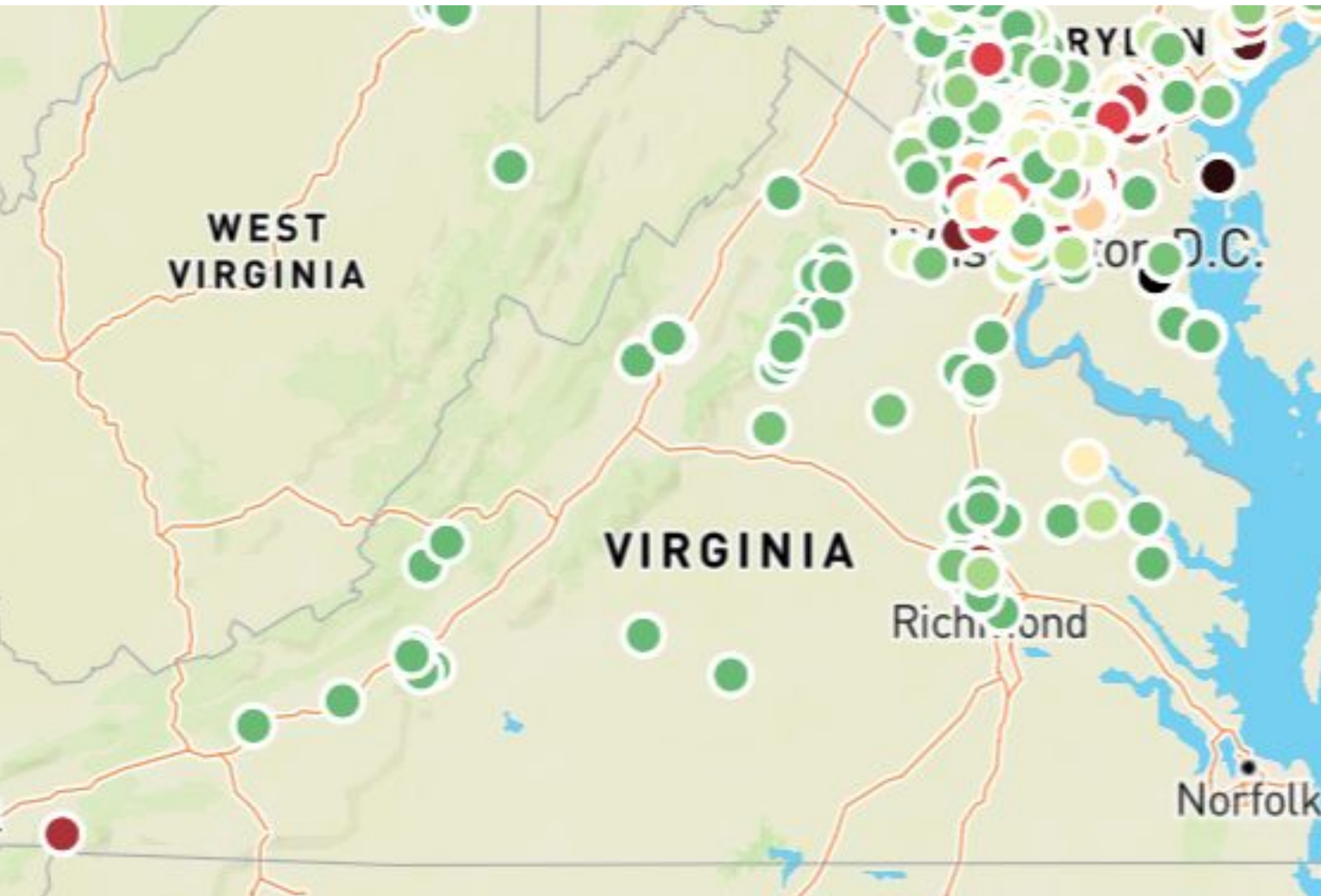
● 100-230 mg/L: **312**

● 230+ mg/L: **551**





# 2024-2025 Virginia



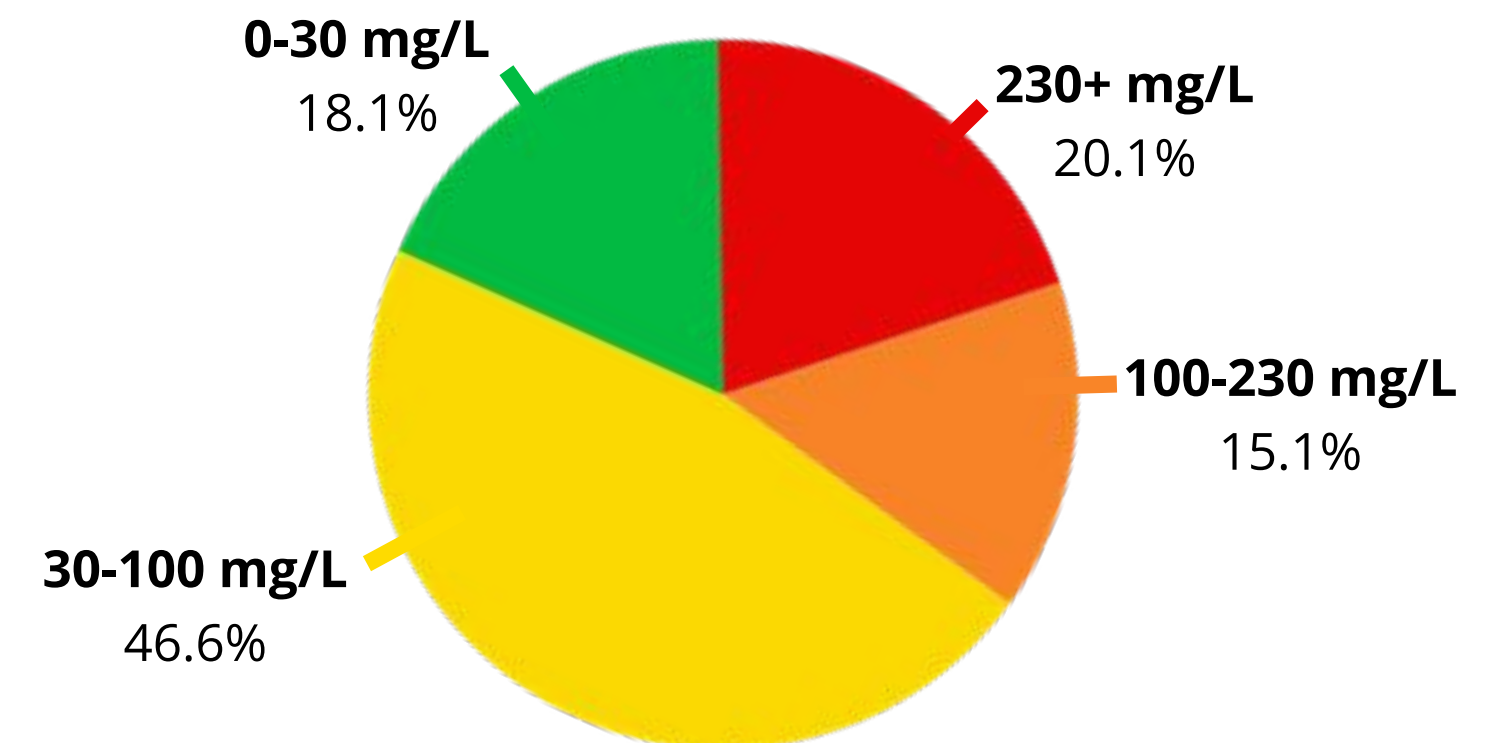
Total chloride readings: **1,182**

● 0-30 mg/L: **214**

● 30-100 mg/L: **551**

● 100-230 mg/L: **179**

● 230+ mg/L: **238**





**July 1, 2025-Today**



**cleanwaterhub.org**



# Data Use

## Government Agencies

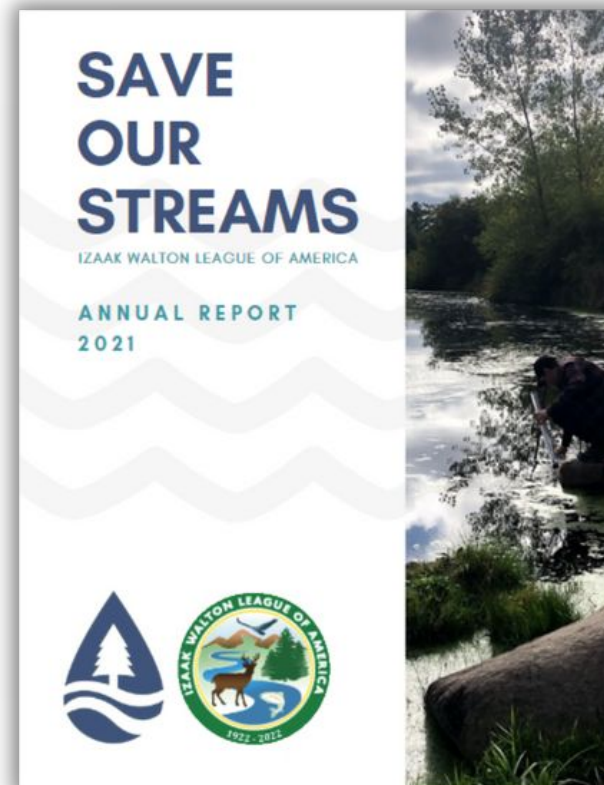
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- Available to government agencies and water quality organizations to...
  - identify areas in need of further study, restoration
  - track impact of BMPs
  - track progress of restoration
- Integrating into the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative

## IWLA Clean Water Team

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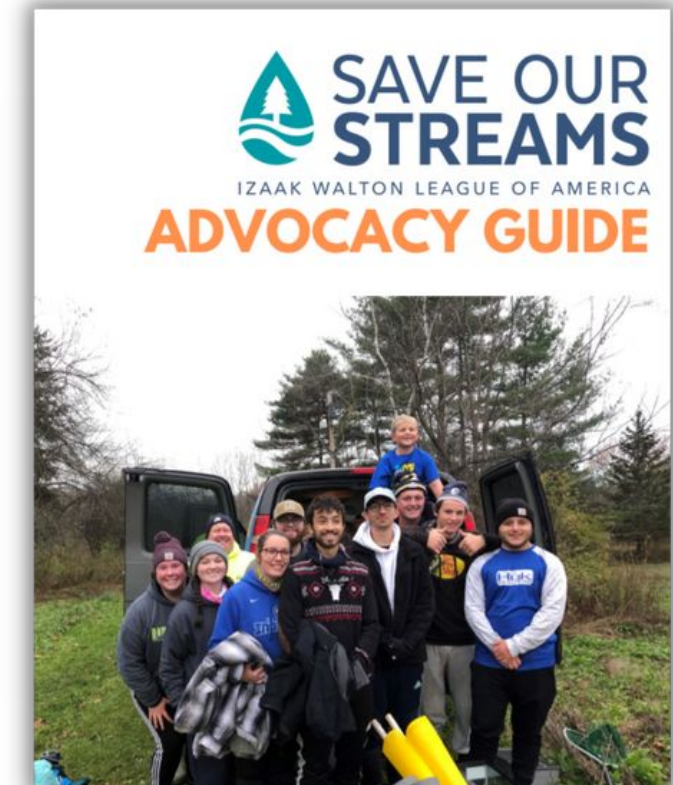
- Annual report
- Updates to volunteers
- Outreach to media sources



## Clean Water Advocates

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- Letters to the editor
- Contacting local representatives
- Educating community members





## Be a Smart Salter

Once you put salt down, it doesn't go away...

Salt alters the soil, harms plants, and weakens infrastructure like bridges and roads.

It gets into our streams, lakes, and rivers, putting aquatic life and human health at risk.

It only takes  
1 teaspoon of salt...  
...to pollute  
5 gallons of water

Salt applied by cities, businesses, and homes adds up.

Americans use **20 million tons** of road salt every year.

**SALT WATCH**  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

**Wisconsin Salt Wise**

Reduce your salt use to protect our water!

### Do your own salt application?

#### 1. Shovel

Clear snow from sidewalks and parking lots before it turns to ice. The more snow you remove, the less salt you'll have to use - and the more effective it will be!

#### 2. Scatter

If you use salt, scatter it so there's space between the grains. A coffee mug of salt is enough to treat an entire 20 foot driveway!

#### 3. Sweep

Once the salt has done its job, sweep up the extra so you can reuse it for later storms - and prevent it from washing away.

#### 4. Switch

Salt doesn't work when the pavement temperature is 15 degrees or lower. Switch to sand or use a different deicer that works at low temperatures.

### Hiring a snow removal contractor?



Choose a contractor who is certified through a winter salt certification program.

Find out about salt application courses from your state Department of Transportation or visit [www.saltwatch.org](http://www.saltwatch.org)!



# Data Action

## TTF Streamkeeper Testifies at Philadelphia City Council about Road Salt

Jamilee Hoffman

Mar 17, 2022



### Opinion: The true cost of salt on the D.C. area's roads



An Annapolis city employee spreads salt on the downtown sidewalks as a slow-moving winter storm dumped snow and ice across the region in February 2021. (Jonathan Newton / The Washington Post)

By Karl Van Nester  
January 19, 2022 at 2:45 p.m. EST

## ACTION ALERT



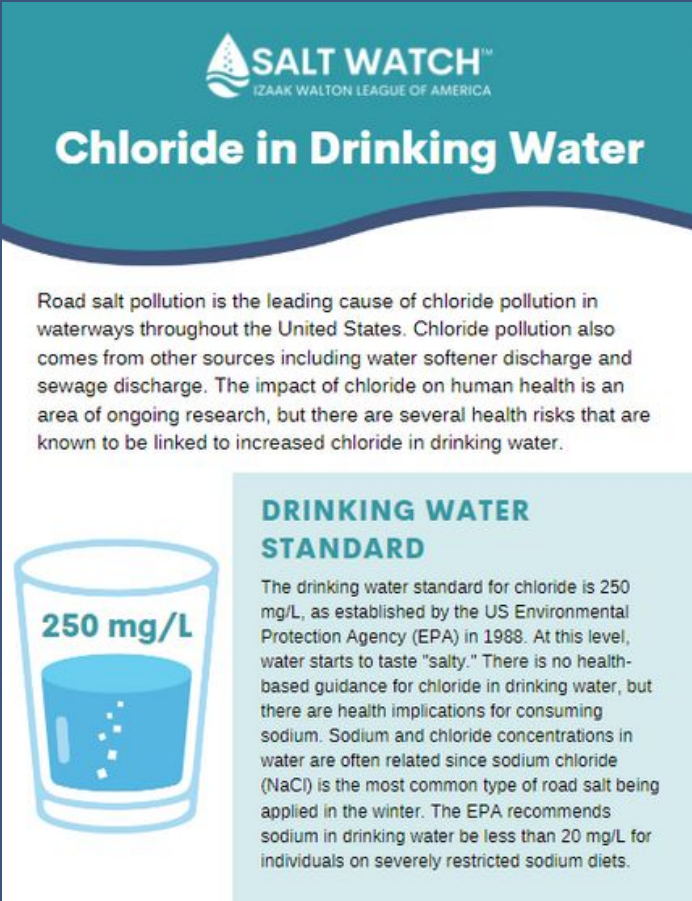
Keep freshwater fresh for future generations!

**Abby – Stand up for clean water in Minnesota by reducing salt pollution!** In many areas of the United States, road salt is used in the winter to create safe travel conditions, but excessive salting is a growing problem. Excess road salt ends up in our waterways, creating toxic conditions for aquatic life and threatening human health.

You can take action on this pervasive problem! [Let your state representatives know that you would like to see reduced road salt pollution in Minnesota.](#)



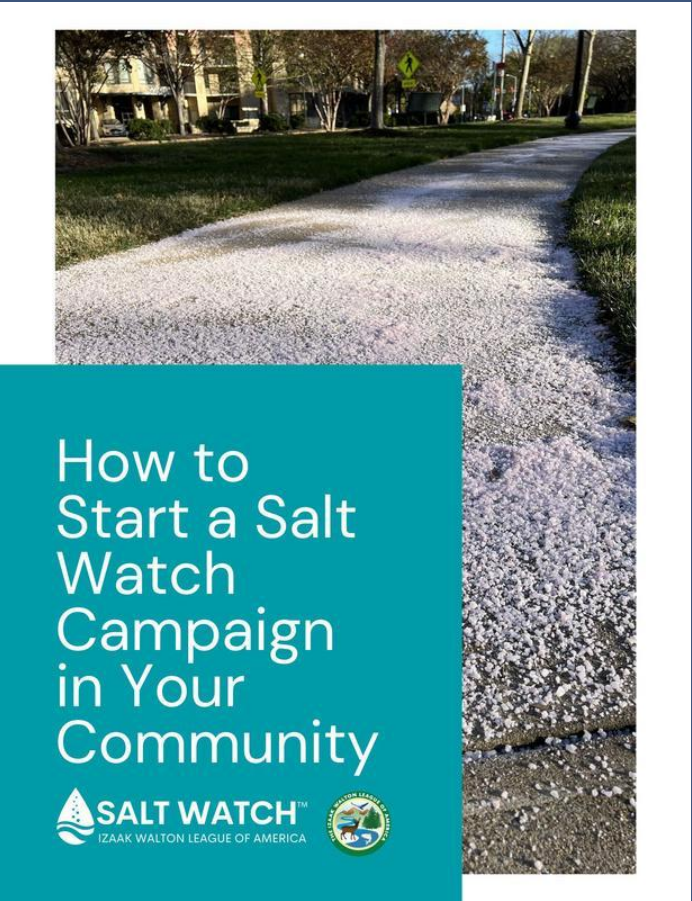
# Resources



Fact Sheets



Flyers



Advocacy  
Guide



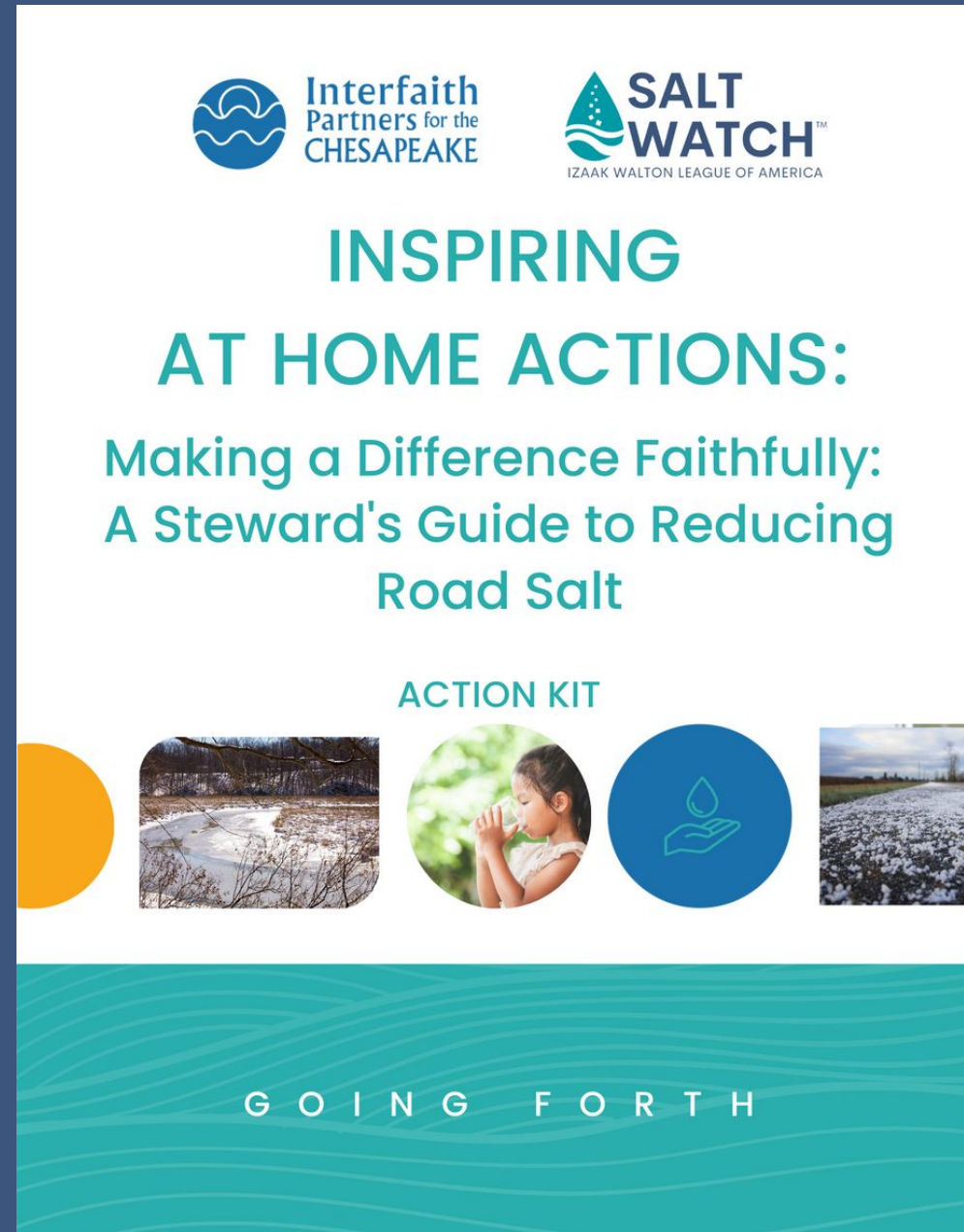
Spanish  
Resources



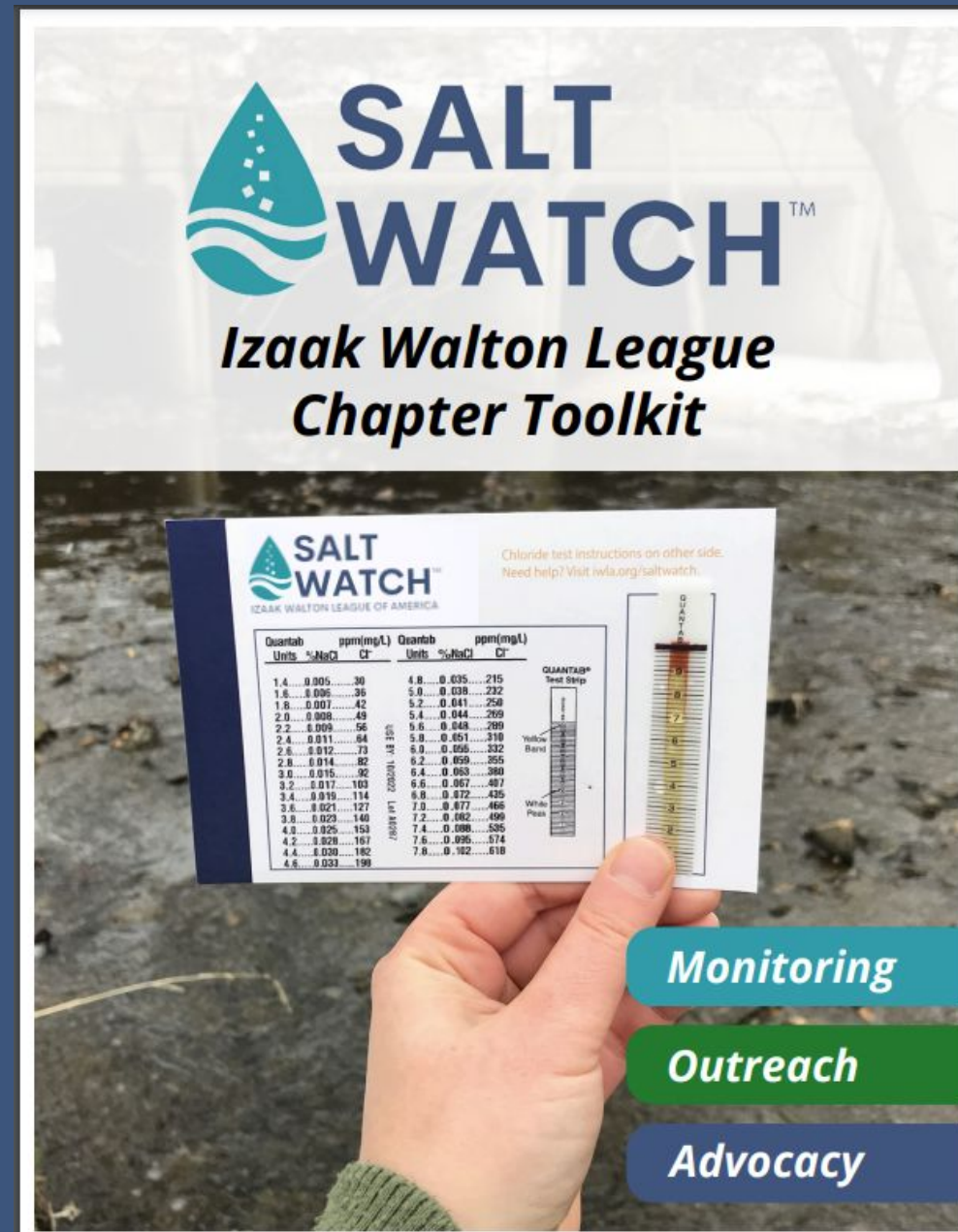
Template  
Letters



# Toolkits



Faith-based  
Communities



IWLA Chapters



Paint the Plow





# Shovel

Clear walkways before snow turns to ice.



# Scatter

A 12 oz mug holds enough salt to treat a 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares.



# Sweep

Sweep up excess salt and reuse it!





# Winter Salt Week

January 26-30, 2026

*[www.wintersaltweek.org](http://www.wintersaltweek.org)*





# SALT RESPONSIBLY



Visit:  
[www.saltwatch.org](http://www.saltwatch.org)

Email:  
[saltwatch@iwla.org](mailto:saltwatch@iwla.org)