



COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601-1400
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 4998, Whittier, CA 90607-4998
Telephone: (562) 699-7411, FAX: (562) 699-5422
www.lacsd.org

JAMES F. STAHL
Chief Engineer and General Manager

February 22, 2006

Dear Santa Clarita Valley Resident,

Thanks to many of you, the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Sanitation Districts) have seen a positive response in efforts to reduce the amount of chloride (salty) waste entering the Santa Clara River. **A new rebate program for automatic water softeners and a recent ban on saltwater swimming pool connections in the Santa Clarita Valley (SCV) will help further limit high chloride levels.**

Automatic water softeners and saltwater pools produce a chloride waste that is put into sewers and sent to one of two local water reclamation plants operated by the Santa Clarita Valley (SCV) Sanitation District. These plants provide extensive treatment and produce water that meets drinking water standards, but do not remove salt. The state's Regional Water Quality Control Board has established a water quality objective for chloride and current chloride discharge levels are above that level. If present at higher levels, chloride could harm downstream aquatic life and agriculture.

Ban on Saltwater Pools

When saltwater pools are drained or when their filters are backwashed, they discharge a salty waste to the sewer system (or the storm drain system that is untreated) that contributes to high salinity levels in the Santa Clara River. In November 2005, the SCV Sanitation District Board of Directors adopted an ordinance making it illegal to connect new or converted saltwater pools to the sewer system. **If you have an existing saltwater pool that was installed prior to December 2005, we encourage you to convert to a freshwater system (or consider disposal methods that do not involve the sewer or storm drain systems).**

Rebate for Automatic Water Softeners

Although it is now illegal to install automatic water softeners in the SCV, many continue to use those installed prior to the March 2003 ban. **You may still have an automatic water softener; if you do, we're asking that you please unplug it.** Rebates of \$100 are currently available to residents who unplug and have their automatic water softeners removed and \$150 to residents who replace the machines with qualified alternative units.

Through a response to public education efforts, the fraction of households in the SCV operating automatic water softeners has dropped from one in seven in 2003 to one in eleven in 2005. However, every SCV household with an automatic water softener will have to unplug their softener to reach state-mandated chloride levels. We encourage you to seek alternatives to automatic water softeners by viewing our website, which allows residents to rate and review alternative water conditioning systems. These reviews are available at www.lacsd.org/chloride.

To qualify for the Automatic Water Softener Rebate Program, the automatic water softener must use rock salt or potassium chloride and must currently be installed in a house, multiplex, condominium, apartment, or mobile home in the SCV that is served by the Sanitation District. All units must be removed from the residence to qualify, but only one rebate is allowed per address.



Automatic water softeners must be disposed in a verifiable manner by a municipal trash collector, the installer of a qualified alternative unit, a licensed contractor, or the owner of the unit if the unit is rented or leased. Residents who would like to schedule a bulky item pickup should call their solid waste collectors. Waste Management/Blue Barrel Disposal can be reached at (661) 259-2398 and Consolidated Disposal Service can be reached at (800) 950-0005. (Each residence is allowed two free bulky item pickups per year; additional pickups are \$25.) Residents must specify they are requesting pick-up of an automatic water softener. Salt must be removed from the softener before the unit is picked up and must be disposed of as household hazardous waste. City of Santa Clarita residents can schedule a household hazardous waste pickup by calling Curbside Incorporated at (800) 449-7587 or (800) HHW-PKUP and residents of other jurisdictions can call (800) 238-0173 or (888) CLEAN-LA.

Through your efforts and those of your neighbors, the river's chloride levels can be further reduced. By achieving state standards, huge cost savings for the community can be realized, eliminating the need to construct new treatment facilities and a 43-mile brine line and three-mile ocean outfall which would **quadruple residents' annual sewer bill to \$500 per household each year.**

For more information on this issue and to obtain a rebate application form, please visit the Sanitation Districts' website at www.lacsd.org/chloride or call 1-877-CUT-SALT.

Very truly yours,

James F. Stahl

Paul C. Martyn
Head, Industrial Waste Section

PCM:PG:dfd
Docs: 598772