



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Salt Savers training equips water softener professionals to cut the daily salt load to freshwater streams**

*Innovative app and incentive program advance chloride reduction goals*

**MADISON, WIS.** — Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District hosted a virtual training Wednesday to educate professionals on how to improve water softener efficiency. The training featured an app that can assist in the evaluation of softeners and enable professionals to maximize salt efficiency based on household water use and local water hardness.

“Not one minute was wasted time,” Melanie Lichtfeld, owner of Lichtfeld Plumbing and training participant, said of the training. “The online app is easy to understand, and the research [the District] did in defining hard water areas with actual numbers that we can access within seconds using that app is what I will call the plumbing tool of the year.”

The training is part of a pilot program, called Salt Savers, the District is implementing in partnership with the Town of Dunn. With Salt Savers, residents receive a rebate to cover the cost of a home water softener inspection and optimization by a trained service provider. Optimizing softeners for household water use and water hardness can reduce salt use by 25% to 50%. If the service provider determines that the current softener is an inefficient “clunker,” residents will receive a \$200 voucher toward replacement with an efficient unit.

“When I first heard about the Salt Savers program through the Town of Dunn newsletter, I thought it was a win-win and jumped on the opportunity,” said Mark Jung, a Town of Dunn resident and pilot project participant. “It’s a wonderful program, and everyone should do it.”

Like most wastewater treatment plants, the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant is not able to remove salt from wastewater, so every bag of salt that goes into a water softener passes through the treatment plant and into local fresh water. Deepening local professionals’ expertise in salt efficiency is a key step in supporting salt reduction efforts in the Town of Dunn and throughout the local watershed.

“The Salt Savers program is an innovative strategy that brings practical action to an immense problem,” said Kelsey Shepperd, administrative coordinator at the Town of Dunn. “Participants in the program can make a significant difference in the community and aquatic communities

downstream with the simple task of having their inefficient water softener optimized or replaced.”

Whatever your location, increasing your softener’s efficiency protects our freshwater resources. Optimizations typically run between \$50 and \$75. If cost is a barrier, encourage your municipal officials to work with the District to incentivize salt reduction in your community. The Village of McFarland is already following the Town of Dunn’s lead and plans to roll out the Salt Savers program this fall.

To learn more about the District’s Salt Savers program, visit [www.madsewer.org/SaltSavers](http://www.madsewer.org/SaltSavers). Homeowners can also use the District’s self-evaluation tool to determine if their water softener should be optimized or replaced; find that tool at [www.madsewer.org/HomeSaltReduction](http://www.madsewer.org/HomeSaltReduction).

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We are a passionate and experienced resource recovery team that aims to protect public health and the environment. Established in 1930 to protect the lakes and streams of the upper Yahara watershed, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District serves about 380,000 people in 26 Madison-area customer communities covering about 186 square miles. The District owns and operates 142 miles of pipe and 18 regional pumping stations that convey approximately 41 million gallons of wastewater to the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant daily. Organized as a municipal corporation, the District is a leader in sustainability and resource reclamation. The District is celebrating its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020.