



## NEWS RELEASE

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# Calif. Cities Urged to Not Enforce Ban on Water Softeners

## *Ban would deny homeowners energy savings, harm environment*

The Salt Institute warns that a water agency's ban of residential water softeners in a corner of California's San Bernardino County would deprive homeowners of energy savings and do harm to the environment. The ban should not be enforced.

"The eight cities and water districts affected by this ban of water softeners should exercise their legal right to not enforce it," said Salt Institute President Lori Roman. "Water softening protects homes, household budgets and the environment and should not be made the scapegoat in a larger battle over California water. Homeowners with water softeners are not the cause of salinity issues."

The board of the Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA) adopted its ban of salt-regenerated water softeners in July. It said a ban would help the agency meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards for recycled water by keeping salt released by water softeners out of its treatment system. However, the IEUA acknowledges that at least 90% of its salinity comes from sources other than softeners.

The Water Quality Association, [which opposes](#) the ban, says it is concerned overzealous governments could knock on doors and demand access to water softeners in basements and garages. This, in fact, is about to happen in California's Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District, where a water softener ban is being strictly enforced. About 2,500 residents suspected of having water softeners were recently warned in writing that if they do not respond within 60 days their homes will be inspected and they may be fined \$1,000 if a water softener is found.

In light of these facts, the Salt Institute urges the cities of Chino, Chino Hills, Fontana, Montclair, Ontario, Upland, as well as the Cucamonga Valley Water District and the Monte Vista Water District to not enforce the IEUA ban, as is their right under the law.

The IEUA is encouraging what it considers alternatives to water softeners, but a salt-regenerated water softener is the *only* product that can remove calcium and magnesium from hard water, which is required for water softening.

The benefits of water softening are immediate, including:

- Less soap and detergent use, putting fewer polluting phosphates into local waterways while saving homeowners money.
- No ugly, clogging scaling from hard water, greatly extending the lives of water heaters, dishwashers and other appliances. This defers the cost of replacement while keeping appliances out of landfills.
- Reduced energy needs, putting less stress on family budgets.
- More suds for better bathing, washing and dishwashing.
- Cleaner, longer-lasting clothes.
- Softer hair and smoother skin.

“The 850,000 San Bernardino County residents the Inland Empire Utilities Agency is supposed to be serving should be able to enjoy the same tangible benefits of water softening that people experience in other parts of the country,” said Roman. “Banning water softeners sends a terrible message, telling homeowners they can’t protect their investments, quality of life or the environment in the way that makes the most sense to them.”

**RESEARCH:** [The Detergent Savings Study](#) (pdf) was conducted in 2010 by Scientific Services S/D, Inc. for the Water Quality Research Foundation. [The Energy Savings Study](#) (pdf) was conducted in 2009 by the Battelle Memorial Institute for the Water Quality Research Foundation. The Salt Institute offers a [one-page fact sheet](#) (pdf) on the benefits of water softening.

**ABOUT THE SALT INSTITUTE:** Based in Alexandria, VA, the [Salt Institute](#) is a trade association promoting responsible uses of salt, particularly for roadway safety, nutrition and water quality. See [www.saltinstitute.org](http://www.saltinstitute.org) or call 703-549-4648. For more on water softening, see [www.water-softening.org](http://www.water-softening.org).