



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2007

Sanitation District Contact: Paul Martyn
(562) 699-7411, extension 2902
Media Contact: Abbi Hertz
(310) 557-3010/ (310) 663-9866

Rayne to Remove all Automatic Water Softener Rental Units in an Agreement that will Reduce Chloride in the Santa Clara River

***Company Partners with Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District to Remove 600 Units
by 2008***

Santa Clarita, CA-Rayne Water Corporation (www.raynewater.com) and the Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District of Los Angeles County (Sanitation District) have entered into an agreement today that will remove by the end of 2008, nearly 600 automatic water softeners currently rented to Santa Clarita Valley residents. This voluntary agreement between Rayne and the Sanitation District is a breakthrough move toward the goal of eliminating use of all automatic water softeners, and will reduce chloride levels in the discharge of highly treated wastewater and thus help to ensure protection of the Santa Clara River.

Approximately one fourth of the estimated 6,500 remaining automatic water softener units in the Santa Clarita Valley are rented to residents, and Rayne's agreement will effectively reduce the total number of units by nearly 10 percent. The agreement will not affect portable exchange units, which are not problematic because they do not add salt to the water before it enters the sewer.

"Rayne made an altruistic move in the Santa Clarita Valley when they agreed to remove salt-discharging water softeners," said Steve Maguin, Chief Engineer and General Manager for the Sanitation District. "Getting these units out of the community is a high priority, and we commend Rayne for their progressive step. We expect similar agreements to be in place with other rental providers in the area in the very near future."

This arrangement has also been well received at the local level. "The City of Santa Clarita is very pleased with the agreement between the Sanitation District and Rayne Water Corporation that will further assist us in our effort to remove salt from the Santa Clara River," remarked Mayor Marsha McLean, Santa Clarita.

In an effort to rid the valley of remaining automatic water softeners, the Sanitation District launched a new automatic water softener rebate program in May, offering residents 100 percent of the reasonable value of their automatic water softener—ranging from \$325 up to \$2,000—as well as free removal and disposal by a licensed plumber. These rebates are consistent with the terms of SB475 legislation authored by Senator George Runner, (R – Senate District 17) and signed into law in 2006. Residents wishing to have their softener removed should call the toll free line at 1-877-CUT-SALT.

MORE

“Rayne is very pleased to work with the Sanitation District to remove automatic water softeners in the Santa Clarita Valley,” said Rayne Chief Financial Officer Bret Vessey. “We know that protecting a valuable environmental resource such as the Santa Clara River is the right thing to do. Rayne’s number one priority is and has always been providing the best point of use water treatment to the residents of Santa Clarita and we look forward to serving them in other ways in the future.” Rayne plans on offering all of their automatic water softener customers reasonably priced alternatives for their water softening needs.

The Sanitation District's water reclamation plants provide extensive treatment and produce water equivalent in quality to drinking water, but do not remove salt. Current chloride discharge levels are above the level that the State Regional Water Quality Control Board has established. If salt levels discharged into the river do not decrease, the Sanitation District may have to install additional treatment equipment resulting in Valley residents’ annual sewer bills substantially increasing to more than \$500 per household, because treatment for chloride may cost more than \$350 million. If all automatic water softeners aren’t removed now, sewer bills may be higher forever.

In March 2003, it became illegal to install new automatic water softeners in the Santa Clarita Valley. Through a response to public education efforts, the fraction of households in the Santa Clarita Valley operating automatic water softeners has dropped, but not enough to comply with the Regional Board’s strict chloride requirements set to protect downstream agriculture for the Santa Clara River. With the new rebate program, the time has come for everyone to remove their automatic water softener.

Alternatives to automatic waters softeners use salt-free water conditioning techniques that are not harmful to the Santa Clara River. Residents can easily identify the best replacement system for their home. The Sanitation District provides an interactive Web site that allows residents to research 50 alternative products, including reviews of the products by fellow Santa Clarita Valley residents. A full list of approved alternatives can be found at www.lacsd.org/chloride.

The Sanitation District serves the wastewater management and solid waste needs of the Santa Clarita Valley. The role of the Sanitation District is to construct, operate, and maintain a regional system to collect, treat and dispose of wastewater and to provide for management of solid wastes. The Directors of the Sanitation District are the mayor and a designated City Council member of Santa Clarita and the Chairperson of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

For more information on automatic water softeners and salt, please see the Sanitation District’s web site at www.lacsd.org/chloride, call 1-877-CUT-SALT or email cutsalt@lacsd.org.

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