



**City of Waukesha**  
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<b>Committee:</b> Board of Public Works	<b>Date:</b> 12/5/2024
<b>Common Council Item Number:</b> ID #24-11289	<b>Date:</b> 12/17/2024
<b>Submitted By:</b> Alex Damien, Director of Public Works	<b>City Administrator Approval:</b> Anthony W. Brown, City Administrator
<b>Finance Department Review:</b> Joseph P. Ciurro, Finance Director	<b>City Attorney's Office Review:</b> Brian Running, City Attorney
<b>Subject:</b> Review and Act on the Proposed Softener Rebate Program	

**Details:**

In order to reduce chloride in the Clean Water Plant's effluent as required by our DNR permit, a water softener optimization program was set up in 2018 as a collaborative effort with local softening companies. The CWP has budgeted \$120,000 per year for water softener optimizations since 2019. Approved optimizer companies receive a \$30 appropriation for each completed optimization. Although optimizations have proven very successful at reducing softener salt discharges, the pace of completed optimizations has not met the need. And although optimizations continue to be an important chloride reduction strategy, the current pace will not provide enough reduction to consistently meet our impending 400 mg/L limit. We are therefore proposing to initiate a softener removal rebate program in January, 2025 to encourage softener owners that are satisfied with the new water supply to remove their softeners.

Although CWP effluent chlorides have ranged from 340-375 mg/L since June, our target concentration to remain below our 400 mg/L limit is actually 250 mg/L to account for seasonal spikes and infiltration and inflow, which are typically 100 mg/L or more. The fluctuations in CWP influent chlorides, make predictions of future chloride concentrations difficult. However, we are confident that further reduction and elimination of softener salt discharges can have a significant impact as demonstrated by the 200 mg/L drop in chlorides since the water transition as softener owners have bypassed, removed, or optimized their softeners.

Attachments:

1. Memo - Softener Rebate Program Details
2. Softener Rebate Application Form
3. CWP Effluent Chloride Chart

**Options & Alternatives:**

Offer a rebate at a higher or lower level than proposed, however a rebate of \$200 will assist the softener owner to fund approximately 50% of the estimated cost to hire a plumber to professionally remove and dispose of a softener. It would be expected that at lower rebate amounts, proportionally less chloride reduction would be achieved.

**Financial Remarks:**

To fund this effort for 2025, we propose to allocate \$100,000 of next year's budgeted \$120,000 in Acct # 7380.52190 (Chloride Reduction Fund), plus an additional \$30,000 of conservation grant funding for 2025 from the Water Utility. We also plan to request approval to carry over all funds unspent in the 2024 budget for Acct # 7380.52190 (\$105,000 currently available) to further support funding this program, for a total of about \$235,000 for the potential removal of approximately 1,200 softeners.

**Executive Recommendation:**

Approve the proposed softener removal rebate program.