



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SUBJECT: Project Home partnership seeks new path to reduce chloride

MADISON, WIS. – A new partnership between Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District and Project Home seeks to put more boots on the ground in the effort to reduce the amount of chloride reaching the region’s surface waters.

Through a \$12,000 innovation grant from the district, Project Home and Fox Water will partner on a project to reduce chloride from area homes tributary to Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District. Project Home staff members will be trained to optimize water softeners and collect data on salt and softened water use. Project Home works to improve the quality and affordability of housing for low-to-moderate income residents through weatherization, water conservation and other repairs. Improving water softener efficiency provides an additional benefit to homeowners while supporting the district’s mission of protecting public health and the environment.

“We’re looking forward to working with Project Home as part of our larger chloride reduction effort,” said Martye Griffin, ecosystem services director for Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District. “After piloting data collection tools with Project Home, we hope to expand their use to other professionals as well. Reducing salt use at the source helps avoid the need for expensive treatment infrastructure, so our innovation grant program represents a good investment for the district and the community.”

Jason Hafeman, outreach coordinator for [Project Home](#), said the innovation grant will also fund and install 10 high efficiency water softeners as part of the nonprofit organization’s support for low- and moderate income residents within Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District’s service area. The grant coincides with the [United Nation’s World Water Day](#) on Friday, March 22, which focuses on the importance of water for creating jobs and supporting economic, social and human development.

“Access to clean, safe water and sanitary services should never be taken for granted and that’s one reason Project Home applied for the district’s chloride innovation grant,” Hafeman said. “People from all walks of life have a role to play in environmental stewardship and the work funded through this grant will help improve the sustainability of our water resources for everyone in the community.”

Most wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove salt, so every bag of salt that goes into a water softener passes down the drain, through the treatment plant and into local fresh water streams. Wastewater that now reaches the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant contains an estimated 220,000 pounds of salt per day.

To meet Clean Water Act permit requirements, the district must achieve an estimated 30,000 pound per day reduction in salt use in area homes and businesses over the next five years. Water softeners are the largest source, contributing more than half of the total load.

Sodium chloride, called table salt or rock salt, is composed of approximately 40 percent sodium and 60 percent chloride by weight. It is the chloride portion of salt that threatens local freshwater and is included in the district's permit. Consultants estimate costs ranging from \$400 million to \$2.3 billion to build infrastructure capable of addressing the chloride issue, which would cause significant increases in sewer bills. The most cost effective solution for ratepayers is to reduce local salt use at the source.

For 2019, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District is offering a remaining total of \$108,000 to businesses, nonprofits and government agencies interested in reducing chloride at the source. In addition to the innovation grants, the district also funds projects that reduce salt use in commercial and industrial water softeners and on roads, sidewalks and parking lots.

Since 2015, the district has funded more than 60 projects that have prevented more than 780,000 pounds of salt from entering surface water and the wastewater stream per year. Salt reduction grant recipients have included Hydrite Chemical, UW–Madison, Epic Systems, Steve Brown Apartments, UnityPoint Health-Meriter Hospital, Dane County, Barnes Inc., The Bruce Co., Village of DeForest, Friends of Lake Wingra, Best Western Plus InnTowner, Community Development Authority of Madison, Capital Water Softener, Hellenbrand Inc. and Culligan Total Water.

For more information about the district's salt reduction rebates and how to apply, visit the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District website, www.madsewer.org and search "[chloride reduction.](#)"

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Established in 1930 to protect the lakes and streams of the upper Yahara watershed, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District today serves 26 Madison area customer communities covering some 184 square miles and 380,000 people. The district owns and operates 141 miles of pipe and 18 regional pumping stations that convey approximately 41 million gallons of wastewater to the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant each day. Organized as a municipal corporation, the district is a leader in sustainability and resource reclamation; its rates are established by the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District Commission.

