

# Change is Coming



**Y**ou've been hearing it a lot lately: Change has come to America. Well, it is coming to the water treatment industry as well, so you better be ready for it.

Last year, with the help of many industry associations and members, the water quality industry narrowly escaped AB 2270, California's proposed legislation that would have banned the use of residential water softeners without any regard to science-based facts.

While this was a huge victory for our industry, we should not assume we are in the clear just yet. And rather than sit patiently with our hands in our laps, we need to be proactive and start taking the

necessary steps and making the necessary adjustments that will bring our industry to the forefront of innovation—all while being good stewards to the environment.

After all, the automotive industry—despite its corporate debacles—has been making serious efforts in the past few years to develop and market environmentally friendly cars with fuel-efficient, hybrid and even electric vehicles, and the energy industry is aggressively pursuing renewable and sustainable energy sources.

I must say, it was certainly encouraging to walk through the recent WQA Aquatech USA tradeshow and learn about all of the new, “green” products making their way into the marketplace. With reverse osmosis systems that use less water and softening systems that reduce brine discharges, it looks as though the industry is beginning to make the aforementioned proactive steps. I can only hope that we will see even more green technologies at next year's Water Opportunity Show, and I encourage all manufacturers to move in this direction.

If you are a water dealer, you need to keep an open mind when it comes to new, green technology. Your customers are aware of water quality issues and are interested in protecting the environment now more than ever before. Replace inefficient timer-based softeners with new demand-initiated water softening systems and ones utilizing countercurrent regeneration, and look into offering green products as they become available. This will reflect positively on your customers, it will reduce our ecological footprint and hopefully keep legislators off our industry's back.

More encouraging evidence that positive change is coming to the water quality industry is the series of water softening research studies that the Water Quality Research Foundation will conduct this year. The Water Heater Efficiency Improvements on Softened Water study by Battelle Memorial Institute will aim to demonstrate water softeners as being one of the best energy savers in residences, and the Energy Benefits of Upgrading to High-Efficiency Water Softeners study will attempt to show utilities what savings water softeners can bring in energy use, water and wastewater treatment and pumping costs, and acquisition costs for water rights.

In the coming year, our industry should have substantial data on the benefits of water softeners and we should see more innovative, green products on the market. As this happens, be sure to stay well versed on research findings and be open to the use of innovative technologies.

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## coming up next month

The June issue of *Water Quality Products* will feature the 2009 Dealer of the Year, dealer networking, a focus on financing, testing, disinfection, WQA Forum and sales techniques. Be sure to visit [www.wqpmag.com](http://www.wqpmag.com) for daily industry news updates.

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