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*For Immediate Release:*

## Aqueous Ozone Finding a Home in Restaurant Kitchens

### *Switch from cleaning chemicals to SAO a food-safety game changer for Sophia Steak*

(Chicago, IL — June 10, 2021) The satisfying crunch that accompanies each bite of a perfectly made salad comes at a cost that restaurant customers rarely consider. When purveyors deliver fresh produce, it must be washed and treated to ensure that it is pathogen-free—particularly lettuce and other leafy vegetables. Traditionally, this has been accomplished with a chemical solution which, for better or worse, has become the industry standard.

**Sophia Steak**, a 5,200 square-foot restaurant in the North Shore enclave of Wilmette, broke with tradition and, in doing so, has joined thousands of businesses around the world that have switched to **Stabilized Aqueous Ozone (SAO)**. Aqueous ozone, which is produced by introducing an electrical charge to normal tap water, has long been recognized for its unsurpassed pathogen-destroying capabilities. The on-demand SAO utilized in Sophia Steak’s food prep area comes from a dispenser installed in 2020 by Chicago-based **H2O3 Solutions**. SAO 100% safe for diners and kitchen workers, with no odor or chemical residue.

“Why would you use a chemical in the treatment of ready-to-eat food when you could use something natural?” asks Sophia co-owner **Glenn Keefer**. “Using a product like SAO to wash fresh produce gives us confidence that we have cleaned them without chemicals. Better yet, it plumps up the lettuce and makes it more delicious—crunchier and fresher—in addition to having been sanitized.”

Kefer also happens to be in the commercial insurance business, with many restaurants and food manufacturers among his clients. He is also on the **Chicago Food Advisory Board**.

“So for me, it’s all about best practices for food safety,” he says, “and the most important thing is protecting produce as it comes in.”

Installing the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> unit was an easy decision for Kefer and his partner, **Ryan O’Donnell**, who grasped the science behind aqueous ozone. As Kefer points out, dentists in Europe use it to sanitize the mouths of their patients. Still, he says, it is not necessarily intuitive how SAO works on a molecular level until you can see it for yourself. Indeed, buy-in from the Sophia Steak staff came when the prep cooks began washing lettuce and other raw food and actually saw the lettuce “plump up” right away.

The H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> unit at Sophia Steak installed easily and required no employee training. In terms of cost savings, Kefer says there is no way to put a precise number on it, but adds that he is absolutely sure H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> has made a difference to the restaurant’s bottom line.

“We serve salads with a lot of different ingredients and I can say that the shelf life of those items is 50 to 100 percent longer than if they had not been rinsed with ozonated water.”

**John Wagner**, President of H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> Solutions, sees tremendous potential for SAO in the U.S. restaurant industry, well beyond food prep. The *S* in SAO stands for “stabilized,” meaning the aqueous ozone produced by the company’s units retains its pathogen-inactivating power for up to 24 hours.

“SAO is unrivaled as a topical cleaner and sanitizer,” Wagner explains, “and restaurant kitchens demand constant cleaning and sanitizing—which historically has been accomplished with chemical cleaners right now. The on-demand SAO that our technology generates can replace those products—it’s a simple matter of filling spray bottles with SAO each morning, and you’re good to go.”

As Wagner sees it, the short-term challenge for H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> will be changing the way restaurant and food-service workers think about what *clean* means. He recognizes that it is not an easy thing to wrap your head around the concept that the same product you use to wash fruits and vegetables can *also* be used to wipe down countertops and other hard surfaces.

“With a mountain of science behind the effectiveness and safety of aqueous ozone—and more than 30,000 SAO units already in use around the world—it’s only a matter of time.”

### **For More Information**

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