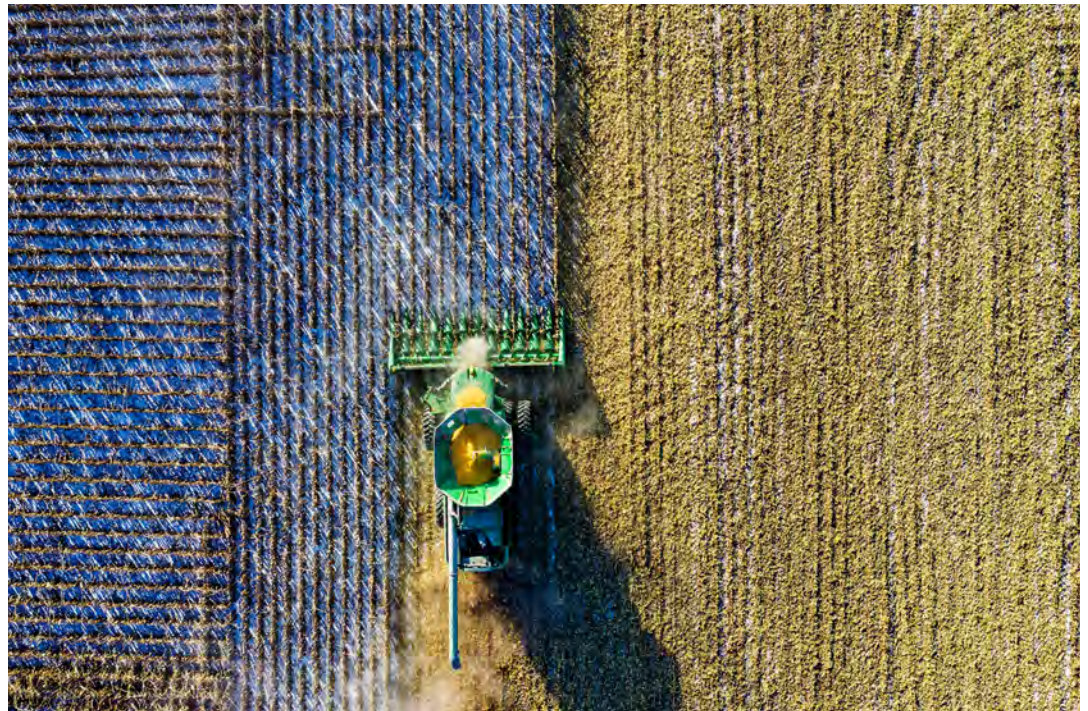




CAPS SCIENTISTS



CAPS Represents Public and Members' Interests in the Capitol

Although CAPS is among California's smallest state employee unions in terms of the number of employees we represent, we enjoy the services of very experienced legislative representatives who wield significant influence in support of bills that protect public health, the environment, and California's natural resources – and that create state scientist jobs and expand science-based programs.

The latest example: Senate Bill 45, the Wildfire, Drought, and Flood Protection Act of 2020. The measure, authored by Senator Ben Allen, would authorize the state to sell \$4.3 billion in general obligation bonds to finance climate-change mitigation projects and fortify state water and water-related resource programs.

CAPS is on record as supporting the bill for several reasons:

- SB 45 funds would be spent on new, or in support of existing, scientific programs in a wide variety of state departments.
- The measure furthers state government's duty to protect the public from life-threatening diseases, safeguard California's wildlife and abundant natural resources, and to protect air and water from toxic waste and pollution.
- To meet those goals, SB 45 would require CAPS members' collective experience, skills, and knowledge, and would likely provide career growth opportunities in several departments as programs launch or expand.

SB 45 would allocate, for example, \$1 billion dollars to reduce wildfire risks where cities and towns meet fire-prone wildlands. Another \$600 million would go to water supply and water quality protection programs, from reducing wildfire risks to people and property to protecting forests, water supplies, and farm crops. The Wildlife Conservation Board would receive \$300 million for projects and programs to, among other things, protect and restore fisheries, wetlands, and wildlife corridors, and manage land to improve resilience to climate change.

CAPS' loud voice in the Capitol amplifies members' shared goals to improve Californians' quality of life, fortify public safety programs, and environmental health through applied sciences. In 1984, CAPS was created by state scientists for state scientists so that together they could gain influence in the state house, in state departments, and at the bargaining table.

Now, 35 years later, that's still what CAPS is doing.

CAPS is a Sponsor of the 2019 Sacramento Regional STEM Fair!



Jacqueline Prawira receiving the 2019 Science Achievement Award, sponsored by CAPS, and presented by Supervisor Director Valerie Chenoweth-Brown.



CAPS Local Rep Beverly Hill exhibits at the College & Career Expo that runs concurrently with the STEM Fair each year.

Gina Darin from the California Department of Water Resources exhibiting at the College & Career Expo, on how much water it takes to make one cheeseburger.



(Left to right) Srinidhi Chandrasekaran, Yahvin Gali, and Nathan Smith displaying their 2019 Naval Science Award presented by Commander Kjell Tengestdal.



NorCal STEM Education Foundation President David Miller, and Vice President/Treasurer Matt Hanson present Grand Prize awards to Chinmayi Balusu, Jacqueline Prawira, and Shreya Ramachandran.

CAPS in Your Corner

CAPS' MOU and the law gives Unit 10 employees protections from workplace bullying and harassment. But navigating the system can be confusing. Fortunately, CAPS members can access experts who understand the complexities and are ready to help if your co-workers or managers cross the line. Here are some real examples:

A member alleged management bullying for volunteering and successfully working on a project that a supervisor wanted to outsource. The ongoing harassment prompted the member to contact CAPS, which assisted with filing a formal complaint against the supervisor.

A department issued a letter to a member that appeared to terminate their employment for medical reasons. After learning of it, CAPS immediately informed the department that the termination was illegal. The department quickly returned the member to work and made reasonable accommodations for the member.

A member contacted CAPS after receiving notice they would be moved from a cubicle to an open-area desk. The member has documented medical cause for restricting exposure to people in open-space areas, but feared retaliation if they filed a Reasonable Accommodation (RA) request. CAPS assisted with a successful RA filing. The member had also received a negative performance review and a counseling memo. CAPS assisted with the rebuttals, attended an in-person meeting, and has encouraged the member to file an EEO complaint.



CAPS Membership is Career Insurance

by Patty Velez, President

It started as a workplace accommodation request and ended with a \$3 million judgment against Caltrans, a high-profile reminder that government employees, like anywhere, can be bullied and harassed.

The Caltrans staff services analyst in this case went through nine years of abuse and litigation before the matter was settled. It's a reminder that when an employee takes on the state, it's really a David-versus-Goliath fight. Fortunately for CAPS members, a team of experienced workplace relations and contract experts stand ready to intervene when things at work go sideways.

According to The Sacramento Bee, the Caltrans employee unsuccessfully filed internal complaints after "supervisors repeatedly ignored directives to keep perfumes and cleaning chemicals like Windex and Comet away from him starting in 2010. He said his supervisor called him an 'idiot' and a 'jerk' and that after his desk was moved he would sometimes find his things soaked in perfume."

"Don't wait until the situation becomes unbearable. There's no reason to endure months or years of anxiety and career roadblocks."

A few observations:

CAPS' contract requires departments to "establish, implement, and maintain a Workplace Violence and Bullying Prevention Program," to put it in writing, and make copies available to all Unit 10 employees.

Will that end all bullying? No. But the provision gives CAPS members and representatives an important tool against employee abuse. In fact, many times workplace bullying issues can be resolved with a meeting or a phone call from a CAPS representative. You can read a few examples of CAPS effective representation on the previous page.

That happens because nearly 3,000 CAPS members level the field through their dues. Part of that money pays for the professional staff who can give sound advice or act on members' behalf when the state violates CAPS' contract. (Non-members are on their own.) It's a form of "career insurance."

And what about supervisors and managers attached to Unit 10? I would argue they **REALLY** need the career insurance of CAPS membership, perhaps even more than the rank-and-file personnel they oversee. They can be terminated without cause, and they deal with subordinates and higher-ups who can give them plenty of grief.

Don't wait until your situation becomes unbearable. There's no reason to endure months or years of anxiety and career roadblocks. If you find yourself bullied, harassed, or subjected to working conditions that infringe on your contract, please call or email CAPS staff at the office nearest you.



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State Scientist Day!

The 31st annual State Scientist Day is almost here! On May 8, hundreds of state scientists and thousands of school kids will gather on the Capitol's West Steps for a day of fun activities and hands-on learning, sponsored by CAPS. Please go to <http://capsscientists.org/outreach/ssd> for more information. If your department would like to participate, please email ssd@capsscientists.org.

GO GREEN WITH CAPS

Are you among the CAPS members who read CAPSule Online instead of in print? If not, please consider it. Emailed issues conserve natural resources, reinforce CAPS' commitment to sustainability, and deliver CAPSule's valuable information quickly and conveniently to your inbox. GO GREEN at <http://capsscientists.org/resources/capsule>.

