

Barbara A. Lee, Director
California Department of Toxic Substances Control
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May 5, 2015

Dear Director Lee:

I respectfully submit this letter to further your understanding of the impact salary inequity has on the morale and commitment of your DTSC scientists. While I have no doubt that DTSC scientists rise to their ultimate responsibility of protecting human health and the environment, I find it difficult to stay loyal to an organization that systematically marginalizes the scientists in our workforce.

Train people well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so they don't want to. Today, DTSC does neither. Early in my career as a site risk assessor, I embraced DTSC's noble mission, and experienced professional growth through the Department's support of staff training and external engagement. I am grateful to DTSC for backing my Board certification in toxicology and my past involvement with the Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council (ITRC). I find today rank-and-file staff are being punished for the mistakes of the few, wherein an unforeseen and substantial budget shortfall has impacted travel and training on the behalf of the Department. Salary inequity for DTSC scientists only adds insult to this injury of late.

Undercompensated scientists are paying out-of-pocket for training opportunities that support their core job duties for the very Department that imposed a moratorium on such activity. What's worse, we engage professionals at these trainings who are fairly compensated for comparable work AND reimbursed for training undergone on their agency's behalf. We have become lesser-class professionals. In recognition of my diminished pay scale coupled with limited professional development, I wonder how much longer I have with DTSC before my salary falls behind the cost of living and my expertise becomes obsolete. My fellow DTSC scientists wonder how much of their income they should budget to stay relevant in their respective fields and save face on behalf of the Department. Civil service for the public welfare shouldn't force these considerations.

Several of us entered the public workforce for a level of certainty and security, aware of a tradeoff of moderate pay for incurring moderate risk. The risk to our future at that of the Department is greater than previously realized. Until a resolution to salary inequity is found, the Department should continue to consider the prospect of losing talent to more lucrative positions elsewhere, and losing recruiting power for competent scientists. It has come to a point that I caution

interested applicants against coming to the Department for the relative lack of compensation and professional development.

I implore you to push for salary equity for your scientific staff. Do it in the interest of salvaging the Department's future. More so, do it in the interest of fairness.

Many thanks for your time and service.

Sincerely,



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Staff Toxicologist, DTSC

CC:

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