

August 10, 2015

Dear Governor Brown,

I read with interest your challenge to the Republican field of presidential candidates. You asked them to recognize that climate change is our biggest environmental challenge, and to act immediately to significantly reduce carbon emissions. I fully support you in this as climate change is THE defining issue of our time that will shape the future of California and the world beyond.

I have a special interest here because I am a proud career state scientist. I have dedicated my professional life to limiting the harm that toxic substances have on the people of California. I still have many productive years of work left and I want them to count as one of your ground troops fighting on the front lines of climate change, drought and other threats to our precious natural resources.

Unfortunately, living and working in the Bay Area has become increasingly challenging because of the relatively low wages paid for my work. My state salary hasn't kept up with the cost of living and worse, entry level scientists' salaries are barely more than the minimum wage that has grown to \$15/hr. in cities across the state. Meanwhile, my professional colleagues both inside and outside state government are paid far more than I am for essentially the same work. The salary differential is incredibly stark, and I feel it every day as I navigate the financial demands of everyday life.

Producing sound science has its foundation in paying a competitive wage. Most new college graduates and midcareer scientists aren't taking state jobs largely because they get paid more by working for other government agencies or the private sector. We no longer attract the best and the brightest. That's not to diminish the many fine state scientists who come to work for the state, but clearly things have changed. California state service is no longer the employer of choice because we don't offer a competitive wage.

Some of the best climate change work being done in the state of California is at the Air Resources Board. Not surprisingly, that agency pays its scientists over 40% more than scientists are paid at other agencies. Little wonder our best and brightest continue to migrate there!

Please consider the future of the state scientific programs -- all of them -- as you formulate the compensation program for state scientists. In a relative sense, we are drastically underpaid--your own surveys from CalHR reflect that. We need more competitive salary ranges implemented immediately so state departments can recruit the next generation of scientific leaders and innovators to carry out your vision for California, and to provide those scientists with a living wage.



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