



CAPS NEWS



(From Left) Senator Jim Nielson, Supervisory Director Scott Bauer, District V Director Monty Larson, CAPS Local Rep Jim Long, Vice President Daniel Ellis, and CAPS Legislative Consultant Shayla Silva.

Photos from Legislative Day!

CAPS' Annual Legislative Day on February 12 was another success, with 13 CAPS leaders from districts throughout the state **visiting more than 50 legislators and their key staff members**. The night before, CAPS hosted a reception in the Capitol for casual visits with dozens of lawmakers and influential state government leaders. **See the CAPS President's Column on page 3 for more details.**



(From Left) Director At-Large Jimmy Spearow, President Margarita Gordus, Supervisory Director Scott Bauer, OSPR Administrator Tom Cullen, Treasurer Kelley Aubushon, Secretary Kris Wiese, and CAPS Member Yvonne Addassi



(From Left) CAPS member John Budroe, Local Rep Esther Tracy, Legislative Staffer, Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, District II Director Maureen Lee-Dutra, and Local Rep Rae Vander Werf.



(From Left) District V Director Monty Larson, President Margarita Gordus, CalHR Director Eraina Ortega, Vice President Daniel Ellis, and Treasurer Kelley Aubushon



(From Left) District II Director Maureen Lee-Dutra, District V Director Monty Larson, Senator Richard Pan, and Treasurer Kelley Aubushon



CAPS Names First Quarter 2020 Professional Development Grant Winners

CAPS membership has many benefits, including eligibility for one of four professional development grants awarded to deserving State Scientists by the Benefits Committee each quarter. Any CAPS member can apply for one of the \$400 awards via the CAPS website, www.capsscientists.org. The winners for the first quarter of 2020 are:

Anna Burkholder, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist), Department of Fish & Wildlife, West Sacramento, will use her grant to attend the once-every-three-years Oil Spill Conference in New Orleans, May 11-14. After submitting a paper on inland Geographic Response Plans (GRPs), Anna received an invitation to present the topic at the conference. GRPs provide emergency response resources for high-risk waters of the state during an oil spill.

Rachel Fabian, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist), Department of Fish & Wildlife, West Sacramento, is using the funds to offset the cost to attend May's Oil Spill Conference. During the event, considered the premier conference for oil spill preparedness and response, Rachel is scheduled to present her paper on developing a framework for regulating spill management teams.

Cassidee Shinn, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist), Department of Fish & Wildlife, West Sacramento, will also use the grant to attend the Oil Spill Conference. Cassidee submitted three papers to the conference's organizers (two with colleagues), and all three were accepted.

Shoba Iyer, Staff Toxicologist (Specialist), Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, Oakland, is using the grant for registration and a portion of her lodging costs to attend the annual Society of Toxicology Conference, March 15-19, in Anaheim. Her proposal submission, "Protecting Public Health and the Environment during Wildfire Recovery," was accepted for presentation.

CAPS Posts Legislative Candidate Endorsements for March 3 Election

California's March 3 primary election is now just days away, and CAPS has endorsed 72 state legislative candidates on the ballot. CAPS' recommendations are based solely on each candidate's experience, record in public office, and stated positions on issues affecting CAPS members. CAPS' complete list of recommended candidates can be viewed at capsscientists.org/caps-legislative-program. That same webpage links to a tool for looking up Senate and Assembly legislators and districts by ZIP Code. CAPS encourages members, regardless of political preference, to please vote.

LEGISLATIVE DAY SUCCESS!

by Margarita Gordus, President



(From Left) CAPS Local Rep John Budroe, District II Director Maureen Lee-Dutra, Vice President Daniel Ellis, Assembly Member Bill Quirk, President Margarita Gordus, Secretary Kris Wiese, and Local Rep Rae Vander Werf.

I was privileged to join 13 CAPS members who visited the Capitol this month for meetings with 51 state legislators and key staff. Our mission for this Legislative Day: promote a bill that would set goals and policy objectives to address the many impacts of climate change, advocate for pension protection, and seek support for State Scientist Day.

CAPS has been committed for many years to supporting legislation to slow or reverse the disastrous effects of climate change. In 2018, for example, CAPS supported measures such as Senate Bill 1015, which would have created a climate resiliency program for projects to fortify California lands and habitats against climate-change impacts.

Last year, CAPS supported Assembly Bill 839, which would set up a special budget account for climate change resiliency projects. CAPS also backed Assembly Bill 557 to provide \$9.25 million for the Department of Water Resources research into the causes and impacts that climate change has on atmospheric rivers so that the state can improve flood control and water storage operations.

Our mission for this Legislative Day: promote a bill that would set goals and policy objectives to address the many impacts of climate change, advocate for pension protection, and seek support for State Scientist Day.

On our Legislative Day this year, we went to the Capitol to talk about “the California Green New Deal,” AB 1839. If passed, the measure will create a legislative framework to address the negative impacts of climate change and the social inequality it has created in California, while protecting public health and the environment. It will set state-mandated goals and policy objectives that future legislation would fulfill in the coming years. The CAPS representatives also expressed strong support for all other proposals to address climate change because it is the most serious threat to the environment.

We also told Senators and Assembly Members that CAPS supports Governor Gavin Newsom’s budget proposal to provide \$500 million to CalPERS. The money would bolster the funded status of state employee retirement plans and, when combined with the \$2.5 billion in state funding from the 2019-20 budget, will save more than \$7 billion in pension costs over the next 30 years. We reminded the legislators and their staff that pensions are promised compensation that our employers need to keep.

CAPS’ delegates invited legislators and their staff members to State Scientist Day on May 6. This will be the 32nd year that CAPS takes over the Capitol lawn with kid-friendly exhibits that showcase how State Scientists protect public health, the environment, agriculture, and California’s natural resources. The event draws thousands of school kids from the area for a fun, informative day – and literally brings state science to the Legislature’s front door.

The Legislative Day objectives did not include State Scientists’ pay inequities. There are a few reasons for this.

The Department of Human Resources, which acts on behalf of the Governor, bargains with CAPS to determine the wages, benefits, and working conditions for Unit 10 rank-and-file employees. CAPS also meets and confers with the Governor’s representatives on behalf of supervisors and managers.

Once a tentative Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is reached, the Legislature appropriates the money through the approval of an MOU bill. Generally, Assembly Members and Senators leave the details of the MOU to the Governor, since that’s the Executive Branch’s job. CAPS has talked about our salary inequities at past Legislative Days, however, since we bargain with the Governor’s team there is little legislators can do to influence the bargaining table.

Further, Governors tend to view such moves as political attempts to circumvent the bargaining process and their Executive authority. And even if the Legislature passed a bill to give a bargaining unit better terms than those bargained, the Governor could veto it. That’s another reason Senators and Assembly Members have little interest in discussing matters that are supposed to be bargained. This isn’t to say that the legislators don’t support State Scientists; quite the opposite. But their role is to review the cost of the MOU and approve money for it. Once an MOU is reached, we know legislators will support it.

CAPS’ Legislative Day was a productive day. CAPS members were in the Capitol, and met with nearly half the Legislature and their staff, where they got to hear directly from State Scientists. Our collective voice was heard.



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**Lobby Day Success!
by Margarita Gordus,
President**

State Scientists' Work Receives Media Attention!

The vital work of California State Scientists at the Department of Public Health's Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory has been in the news for fighting COVID-19, the "novel coronavirus" that originated in China.

According to news reports, the state lab in Richmond can turn around a test for the presence of the virus in two days, compared with up to seven days for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The state also forged agreements with more than a dozen medical laboratories to form a diagnostic network for the rapid testing of patients for the virus.

The headlines, started in the Bay Area on February 4, quickly spread to media outlets throughout California. Within three days, [MSN.com](https://www.msn.com) and [Yahoo! News](https://www.yahoo.com/news) had picked up the story for their home pages.

The COVID-19 circumstances are troubling, but the media coverage reminds the public that State Scientists protect public health, California's vast natural resources, agriculture, air, and water. Job well done, CAPS members at the Richmond Lab!

