



CAPS UPDATE



CAPS Bargaining Team and Administration Continue Bargaining Ahead of July 1 Deadline

Talks between the CAPS Bargaining Team and the Department of Human Resources (representing the state) continued in June, focused on the Newsom Administration's request that all state employee bargaining units come to an agreement that reduces employee compensation costs to help close a \$54 billion state budget deficit caused by the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Since May 14, the Administration has sought legislative authority in the 2020-21 state budget to impose two unpaid furlough days per month for those employees whose bargaining units fail to agree on employee compensation reductions by the start of the fiscal year on July 1. The Administration's proposed budget also did not fund the 5% raise provided for in CAPS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is scheduled to take effect on that same date.

The Legislature countered with its own state budget proposal which was released on June 10. It did reduce employee compensation equivalent to two furlough days, but it did not specifically state those savings shall be achieved by furloughing state employees during the next fiscal year. However, the proposed budget kept in place the scheduled salary increases for units per their MOUs, including the 5% in CAPS' expiring MOU. Lawmakers passed that budget on June 15th to meet state constitutional requirements, with the understanding that the governor and the Legislature would continue to work out their fiscal differences.

As of this writing in mid-June, CalHR is still bargaining with CAPS and other unions. Governor Newsom and the Legislature remain in budget negotiations. All have the July 1st deadline to reach agreements. However, the Legislature signaled it will give the Administration authority to cut state employees' compensation should bargaining fail to accomplish that goal.

"We now explicitly anticipate budget savings achieved through the collective bargaining process in the event anticipated federal funds do not materialize," legislative leaders said in a mid-month statement. "We encourage labor unions to engage and finalize agreements with the Administration prior to July 1. Savings through the collective bargaining process are critical to maintaining the state's fiscal health..."

CAPS' Team is bargaining with the state, and is committed to protecting Unit 10 salary levels, preserving pay increases in the MOU, and protecting promised pensions, leave, and other benefits, while meeting the state's fiscal objective. Bargaining news can change from hour to hour. As always, CAPS will keep members informed through CAPS Updates, CAPSule, and the capsscintists.org website.

CAPS Advocates for Members' Workplace Safety

CAPS has always advocated for the state to provide State Scientists with **safe workplaces** and **healthy job spaces**. In that vein, **President Margarita Gordus** recently urged the Newsom Administration to adopt "**commonsense guidelines**" to stem **COVID-19 spread** as officials began reopening offices and job sites statewide.

In a May 29 letter to CalHR, President Gordus wrote, "**CAPS would like to ensure that our members do not return to work and business as usual only to find themselves in harm's way should the virus rebound.**" She encouraged the state to adopt staff management plans that include, among other measures: continuing **telework policies** and **alternate workweek policies**; **configuring work areas** to promote **social distancing**, providing **personal protective equipment**, soap, and hand sanitizer for all on-site employees; **safety protocols** for scientists in the field; and "emphasizing the need for staff to **stay at home when sick**, **hand washing**, engaging in **self-screening procedures**, and wearing **face coverings**."

The President also cited "**buildings that CAPS sees as particularly high risk for the transfer of respiratory illnesses** like the novel coronavirus that deserve particular attention." You can see that list, and President Gordus' full letter, [here](#).

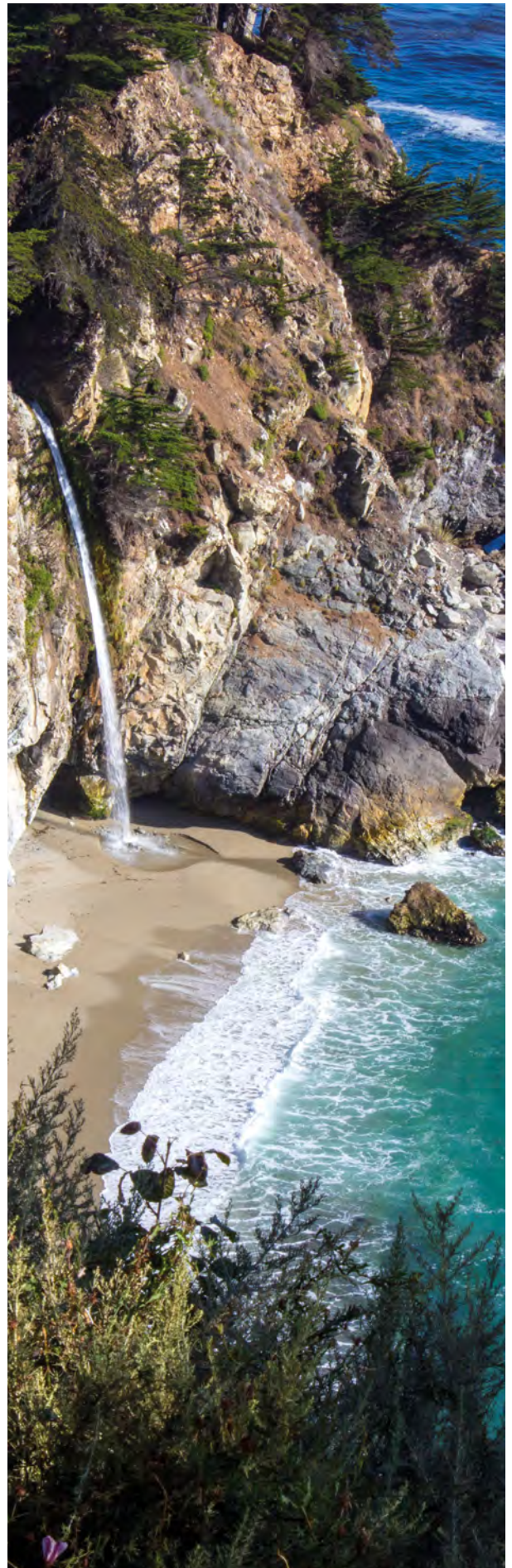
Payroll Deductions for CAPS Member-Only Insurance Payments Continue

One of the many benefits of CAPS membership provides access to group rates on term life insurance, long-term disability insurance, auto, and homeowner coverage. CAPS sponsors the program through a partnership with **Liberty Mutual**.

As a convenience to policyholders, the Liberty Mutual premiums have always been paid **via payroll deduction**. Recently, it appeared that the service would be discontinued. However, **after discussing the matter** with all parties concerned, CAPS is pleased to report that **the state will continue to deduct those payments**.

Remember, CAPS membership includes – at no additional cost – **\$5,000** in term-life insurance, **\$5,000** in accidental death and dismemberment insurance, and **\$100,000** in travel accident coverage. The payroll deductions **apply only to premiums for additional coverage** purchased through CAPS' agreement with Liberty Mutual.

Please see [CAPS' member benefits page](#) for more information about Liberty Mutual insurance coverage at CAPS' low group rates and how to apply.



CAPS Stands in Solidarity with Members of the Black Community

CAPS Board of Directors released the following public statement on June 12.

We are at a moment in our nation's history where the struggles of Black Americans are front and center across the country. In light of George Floyd's killing in Minnesota, subsequent peaceful protests, and the use of government force to suppress free speech, the California Association of Professional Scientists stands with the Black Community's call for laws and lawmakers to correct racial injustice and end violence against Black Americans. CAPS acknowledges the Black Community's struggles. Their lives matter. Black Lives Matter.

As a union, we are committed to fighting for full equity, dignity, and respect for all our members, and we will continue to do so. But we are also committed to standing against the larger systemic racial injustices in society and the workplace that challenge our mission to represent State Scientists.

CAPS' members protect public health, food security, the environment, and California's natural resources. Yet these are least realized in the most impoverished parts of the state where people of color comprise a majority of the population. Minorities are disproportionately affected by pollution and a lack of access to green spaces. As State Scientists, we have the power to ensure environmental equity for all our state's citizens. As scientists, we build a better environment, and provide a better quality of life for all Californians, regardless of race or ethnicity.

CAPS' Board of Directors acknowledges that ending institutional racism starts with understanding and dialogue. It is time for labor leaders, unions, and all of us to speak plainly and publicly.

In solidarity and hope,

Margarita Gordus
President

Daniel Ellis
Vice President

Kelley Aubushon
Treasurer

Kris Wiese
Secretary

Willard Garrett
District I Director

Maureen Lee-Dutra
District II Director

Justin D. Garcia
District III Director

David Rist
District IV Director

Monty Larson
District V Director

Jimmy Spearow
Director-At-Large

David Miller
Director-At-Large

Scott Bauer
Supervisory Director

A Message to CAPS Members

CAPS members received this message via email with the June 12 statement from CAPS' Board.

After listening to members and weighing our responsibilities as leaders and labor representatives, the CAPS Board of Directors is releasing a public statement that our union stands in solidarity with members of the Black community. You will find it online at www.capsscienists.org. Our social media platforms will carry a similar message and link to the online statement.

Since organizing in 1984, CAPS has avoided public statements about social or political issues not directly germane to members' pay, pensions, and other terms and conditions of employment. CAPS leaders always have respected members' diversity – including their diverse political opinions. And CAPS focuses spending members' dues on matters that impact their jobs and livelihoods because that is why our union exists.

Yet it is appropriate that we speak out now, as the directors of a diverse union of working people who value life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, free from the fear of racial discrimination. This is not, and should never be, a political issue.

CAPS' opposition to racial injustice in all its forms is not Republican or Democrat. We are not taking a political stand; we are expressing an appropriate rejection of black suppression that predates our nation's founding. Declaring CAPS' support for equality is not a loss of our focus; it is inherent in our vision.

CAPS' public stance against racial injustice also aligns with the uplifting, life-altering public service of our members. Our ability to enable change may seem small, but State Scientists create a better environment for the less fortunate. Often those individuals are black, indigenous, or people of color in some of California's most impoverished areas. Actions, of course, speak louder than words. Thus, CAPS will dedicate a portion of our website to provide resources for our membership.



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SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

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U.S. Postage
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Permit No. 420
Sacramento, CA

CAPSule (ISSN 10446230) is published monthly by the California Association of Professional Scientists, 455 Capitol Mall, Suite 500, Sacramento, CA 95814. Periodicals Postage Paid at Sacramento, CA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: 455 Capitol Mall, Suite 500, Sacramento, CA 95814-2483.

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Media Reports Highlight State Scientists

CAPS members possess the education, expertise, experience, and dedication to science that journalists often feature in news reports. Here are some recent examples:

[The Washington Post](#) recently quoted CAPS member **Deana Clifford**, a Senior Wildlife Veterinarian for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, in a recent report on a virus that is killing rabbits across the Southwest.

[Backpacker.com](#) has an extensive feature in its May/June issue about three CAPS members, **Justin Garwood, Michael van Hattem, and Ken Lindke**, who have been studying the disappearing Grizzly Glacier and the Salmon snowfield in Northern California. Their work is a labor of love performed on their own time – glacier research is outside of their job duties as State Scientists.

It's always encouraging to see the valuable work of CAPS' members highlighted in public forums, in the press, and online. When a State Scientist's **expertise and commitment** is widely recognized, it helps shape **positive public and political opinions** about all CAPS members who protect public health, food security, the environment, and California's natural resources. Thank you, **Deana, Justin, Michael, and Ken!**

