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**Subject:** Bargaining Follow-up  
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Dear CAPS Team,

We are the Environmental Scientists and Senior Environmental Scientists (Specialists) in DTSC's Safer Consumer Products Program (SCP). We are monitoring the bargaining process closely, because the outcome will factor into our future employment decisions. CalHR's response will show whether this administration values scientists and our work. We've also talked to our managers, who are likewise monitoring this negotiation because they recognize that its results will have implications for our entire program for years to come.

**Without prompt action to address this pay inequity, we anticipate adverse impacts to our program in terms of hiring, morale, and retention.** For a program that is still in the early stages of its existence, the next several years of growth and development are critical, and we urge the Newsom Administration to correct this pay disparity as soon as possible.

**Within our program, there is no distinction between tasks assigned to the Environmental Scientist (ES) series and Hazardous Substances Engineer (HSE) series.** Staff from both series are distributed across all teams and participate in a mix of technical and policy-based work without regard to classification. Senior ESs and Senior HSEs lead workgroups with equal frequency, often providing direction to both HSEs and ESs. It is demoralizing for Senior ESs tasked with these responsibilities to earn 30-40% less than Senior HSEs for the same work, let alone earn less than the HSEs under their charge. Due to the pay inequity, some of SCP's team leaders and project managers are the lowest paid staff of the teams they lead.

**SCP needs ESs to successfully carry out its mandate.** ESs in SCP often have more extensive training, advanced degrees, and interdisciplinary experience than their HSE colleagues, which helps them navigate the nebulous space between technical assessment and regulatory implementation. Our program currently has Senior ESs and ESs with backgrounds in chemistry, biology, toxicology, ecology, marine sciences, data science, and environmental planning and policy. Diversity in perspective is essential for productive teamwork and informed decision-making. The program will lose breadth of experience if positions are converted to HSEs to attract candidates through higher compensation.

**SCP must remain competitive to attract and retain top talent that can further its mission.** Scientists working for the Federal Government and for counties across California earn significantly higher salaries than those working for DTSC. The maximum salary for a San Francisco County Senior Environmental Specialist is 21.4% more than the maximum for DTSC's Senior ES position, and the salary for a Federal Scientist (GS-13) is 32.33% more. In addition, California's Air Resources Board (ARB) pays their scientists like engineers; SCP has already lost ESs to ARB.

**The pay inequity problem is apparent to those external to the program as well.** Various NGOs

have spoken about the need to fairly compensate the scientists in SCP. Kelly Moran of TDC Environmental, a member of SCP's Green Ribbon Science Panel, conveyed her concerns to DTSC's Independent Review Panel. Gina Solomon, former CalEPA Deputy Secretary for Science and Health and currently with the Public Health Initiative, mentioned the pay inequity issue in both her recent report, *California's Green Chemistry Initiative at Age 10*, and in her testimony to the Assembly Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials Committee and Senate Environmental Quality Committee.

**This is an opportunity for the Newsom Administration to demonstrate its commitment to those who work hard every day to ensure that California excels in scientific leadership and environmental protection.** We are enthusiastic about SCP's many successes to date and know that more equitable compensation will help SCP attract and retain the diverse and innovative scientists needed to lead the nation in toxics reduction and safer products.

Sincerely, the undersigned scientists of SCP,

Simona Balan, PhD

Jennifer Branyan, MBA

Topher Buck, MFS

Anne Cooper Doherty, PhD

Kelly Grant, PhD

Christopher Leonetti, PhD

Abigail Noble, PhD

Michelle Romero-Fishback, PhD

Christine Papagni, MS