

November 11, 2020

Subject: CAPS Bargaining Updates

CAPS Bargaining Team,

I am an Environmental Scientist with the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) in San Luis Obispo. This letter is a personal follow-up letter to the one attached that was written with my coworkers. The one we wrote together does an outstanding job of explaining our work and the salary differentials and I am writing this additional letter to express how the salary issues have personally affected my family and me.

I started at the Water Boards in 2005 and at that time my salary was 10 to 15 percent lower than engineers and geologists doing identical work. This equated to them making around \$300 to \$500 more a month, which felt significant the time but nowhere near the magnitude it has reached. Several years after I started working their salaries jumped to the current differential of 25 to 33 percent greater than mine. This currently equates to the engineers and geologist making \$1,800 to \$2,400 more a month.

The salary differential might be understandable if our work was significantly different but I do identical work to a geologist and an engineer in my unit at the Water Board. Our work is not just similar, it is literally identical; we work on same exact projects, do the same analysis, and write the same exact documents. In terms of production, we produce the same quantity and quality of work. At work geologists, engineers, and Environmental Scientists are similar but unfortunately afterwards we are not. Their higher salaries equate to them having a much higher standard of living. This means not only having nicer things but also having more time to enjoy life. As an Environmental Scientist, to make ends meet and to help put a child through college, I must work an extra 12 to 16 hours a week at a second job.

Another inequity I face each day is the disparity between my salary and my supervisor's. My supervisor and I started at the Water Boards around the same time and when she worked at the staff level we did similar work. I acknowledge that she now has more responsibilities but since she promoted, she makes \$4,000 more a month than me. This does not seem fair. One day we are paid the same and after a promotion she makes 50 percent more. This disparity makes the relationship between management and staff awkward because she makes so much money managing my work. For managing four to five staff members, she now makes an additional \$4,000. How can this be right?

I am extremely dedicated to my job at the Central Coast Water Boards in part because I work to protect disadvantage communities from environmental injustices. However, it seems ironic to me that I do so for an agency that knowingly supports injustices amongst its own people. I do not feel that I am unreasonable person, I just simply want what every man and woman deserves, which is equal pay for equal work. Regardless of pay, I work as hard as I can at the Water Board because I know in my conscious that I can make a difference for the environment and for those in need of drinking water. I hope that the State of California also has a conscious and can find a way to address the inequities imposed on its own scientists.

Regards,

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