November 10, 2020

Subject: CAPS Bargaining Updates

CAPS Bargaining Team,

We, the Environmental Scientists at the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) in San Luis Obispo, are writing to acknowledge your efforts to address the salary disparities for Environmental Scientists across the state and offer insight into our collective experience.

California needs Science. California needs state scientists. We, the Environmental Scientists at the Central Coast Water Board, play a key role in developing and implementing plans and measures to protect and restore the quality of water resources throughout the Central Coast region. We, the Environmental Scientists, have a wide range of responsibilities that have a direct impact on water quality throughout the Central Coast region and well beyond. Some examples of these responsibilities include:

- Designing and managing a region-wide drinking water well testing program, free to participants, designed to inform Central Coast residents about the safety of their drinking water;
- Developing and enforcing requirements that address water quality impacts caused by discharges from irrigated agricultural lands - such as pesticides and toxicity, nutrients, and sediments – prioritizing nitrate impacts to drinking water sources;
- Deriving water quality criteria for neonicotinoid insecticides that define pesticide levels which are protective of aquatic life - applicable for use throughout any freshwater ecosystem in all of North America;
- Spearheading an initiative to address Water Quality and Homelessness, promoting collaboration with a variety of stakeholders to develop action-items that could prevent, reduce, and/or correct impacts from trash and fecal bacteria discharges to surface waters from homeless encampments;
- Implementing the Central Coast's regionally scaled surface water quality monitoring and assessment program to collect, assess and disseminate water quality information to aid decision makers and the public in maintaining, restoring, and enhancing water quality and associated beneficial uses in the Central Coast region;
- Participating in the statewide Freshwater Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Program in coordination with the California Cyanobacteria Harmful Algal Bloom Network to identify and respond to HABs throughout the Central Coast. Information is shared publicly via the California Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Portal as a resource to provide public awareness of the risks associated with HABs to people, pets, livestock and wildlife;
- Managing a regional Grants Program that plans and implements high priority projects with performance measures to demonstrate progress toward achieving measurable outcomes and improvements to water and habitat quality and associated beneficial uses;
- Developing water quality standards and implementation plans for the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coastal Basin; and
- Applying the core principles of environmental justice and Human Right to Water in all our work.

Within our office, there is no distinction between tasks assigned between Environmental Scientists and our colleagues in Bargaining Unit (BU) 9. We manage and lead similar projects, grants, and working groups just as frequently and yet our pay as Environmental Scientists is alarmingly lower than the pay of our colleagues within our agency.

As demonstrated below in Table 1, the monthly pay at the top of the Environmental Scientist (Range C) classification is $7,364.00, while the top of the Engineering Geologist (Range C) classification is $9,777.00 and $9,180.00 for the Water Resources Control Engineer (Range C). That is a difference of $2,413.99 (33%) and $1,816.00 (25%), respectively. The extreme inequitable gap in salaries, exhibited in Table 1, exists despite the comparable duty statements and required qualifications for our jobs. It is appalling to be paid 33% less than our colleagues, that have similar qualifications, while doing like work.

***Table 1**. Horizontal Salary Relationships between BU9 and BU10 (Source)*

Classification[1]	**Monthly Compensation (Top of Scale)**	**Difference from Environmental Scientist Salary**	**Percent Difference from Environmental Scientist Salary**
Environmental Scientist (Range C)	$7,364.00	-	-
Engineering Geologist (Range C)	$9,777.00	$2,413.00	33%
Water Resources Control Engineer (Range C)	$9,180.00	$1,816.00	25%

However, the problem is even more pronounced when comparing our pay with the pay of the class directly above us, the Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory) class. Traditionally, the State has tried to maintain a salary difference of only 10% in these direct-report relationships.[2] However, the monthly salary **difference is $4,158.00 or 56%**. This extreme gap does not exist between the engineers and their supervisors, as demonstrated in Table 2.

[1] Range C is the highest science classification and the highest unlicensed engineering classification. Licensed Engineering Geologists are in Range D and can earn up to $10,430.00 which is $3,066.00 or 42% more than Range C Environmental Scientists. Licensed Water Resources Engineers are also in Range D and can earn up to $10,377.00 which is $3,013.00 or 41% more than Range C Environmental Scientists. To be a Senior Engineering Geologist or a Senior Water Resources Control Engineer, you must be licensed.

[2] *"CalHR also tries to maintain appropriate salary differentials between classes within the same career pattern. For example, the maximum salary for a first-line supervisor is generally 10 percent above the maximum salary for the full journey-level class it supervises. This is known as the vertical salary relationship."* (Source)

***Table 2**. Vertical Salary Relationships between Rank and File Employees and Supervisors (Source)*

Classification[3]	Monthly Compensation (Top of Scale)	Salary Difference between Rank and File Employees and Supervisors	Percent Salary Difference between Rank and File Employees and Supervisors
Environmental Scientist (Range C)	$7,364.00	-	-
Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory)	$11,522.00	$4,158.00	56%
Engineering Geologist (Range D)	$10,430.00	-	-
Senior Engineering Geologist	$12,223.00	$1,793.00	17%
Water Resources Control Engineer (Range D)	$10,377.00	-	-
Senior Water Resources Control Engineer	$12,432.00	$2,055.00	20%

These pay inequities will cost California money and talent as the State will find it difficult to attract and retain good scientists. This will, in turn, inevitably negatively impact the Water Boards' efforts to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the benefit of present and future generations.

We are asking for the Newsom Administration to acknowledge their commitment to science, and to us, California's Environmental Scientists. ***We, your Environmental Scientists, are proud of the work we do. Are you?***

Respectfully,

Jacqueline Tkac, Irrigated Lands Program, 2.5 years of service

Alyssa Bucci, Cannabis Regulatory Program, 2.5 years of service

Julia Dyer, Regional Monitoring, 20.5 years of service

Alexandra Coblentz, Stormwater Program, 2 years of service

Melissa Daugherty, Regional Monitoring and Assessment Programs, 5 years of service

Mark Cassady, Water Quality Certification (401) Program, 3 years of service

[3] As noted above, to be a Senior Engineering Geologist or a Senior Water Resources Control Engineer, you must be licensed. That is why we included Range D rank-and-file staff in Table 2.

Paula Richter, Irrigated Lands Program, 6 years of service

Katie McNeill, Grants Program, 18 years of service

Kathleen Hicks, Water Quality Certification (401) Program, 1 year of service

Larry Harlan, Watershed Assessment Program, 21 years of service

Peter Meertens, Watershed Assessment Program, 15 years of service

Jamie Pratt, Irrigated Lands Program, 1.5 years of service

Kim Sanders, Basin Planning and Water Quality Certification, 14.5 years of service