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California Department of Human Resources  
1515 S Street, North Building, Suite 500  
Sacramento, California 95811-7258

Dear CalHR Representative,

The salary equity problem for state scientists has a negative impact on CDFW's ability to attract and hire scientists qualified in the field of fisheries stock assessment. 'Stock assessment' describes a variety of quantitative population dynamics modeling techniques vital to effective fisheries management. It is what fisheries scientists use to describe the status of a fished stock to determine whether it is overfished or overfishing is occurring. Stock assessment requires a specialized set of technical skills that are relatively uncommon among natural scientists. Few universities teach courses in stock assessment and theses or dissertations implementing it are often discouraged due to its applied nature. Young academics are often encouraged to contribute to emerging ecological theories rather than focus on applied problems of fisheries management. Therefore, the majority of stock assessment application and innovation occurs in agency settings, in particular at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA).

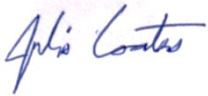
While many of the major west coast fisheries are managed under federal purview, California has management authority over many highly productive and valuable fisheries, some crossing state or international borders. Effective management of these fisheries, for the benefit of the state's commercial fleets and general public, requires qualified staff who can perform stock assessments and communicate and collaborate with other highly specialized personnel across the state's borders. Few state-managed fisheries have benefited from stock assessment, for a variety of reasons. First, CDFW's Marine Region is limited in staff knowledge of and capacity for performing the work. Second, in many cases the long-standing and consistent monitoring programs that provide the necessary data for stock assessment do not exist, mostly because of a lack of consistent resources. However, this may be changing. In my time with the Marine Region, under the direction of our current manager, Craig Shuman, I've seen great commitment to producing fisheries management plans based on sound quantitative assessments and improving our internal capacity to do the necessary work. The region has also committed substantial resources to implementing innovative modeling techniques designed for data-limited situations such as we have for many state-managed fisheries.

Despite these positive strides, the region is still stymied by a lack of staff capacity and I believe this to be largely due to an inability to attract the necessary talent. My understanding is that efforts to hire within a formerly available "research scientist" class providing an elevated salary have recently failed, for reasons unknown to me. In recognition of the need for internal stock assessment, the last budget change proposal submitted by the region requested funds to hire a team of staff with quantitative

fisheries skills. This effort was successful in bringing enough resources for only one senior specialist position, which I now occupy. I find there is far more work to do than I alone could ever accomplish. Additionally, without a team of colleagues to collaborate with, I feel my efforts are less efficient and I struggle to keep up with innovations in the field.

Please show that you value California's fisheries and marine ecosystems by supporting salary increases for Unit 10 state scientists commensurate with state engineers and in keeping with application of GC 19826 to rank and file as well as the supervisory class.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julia Coates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Julia Coates

Cc: [caps@capsscientists.org](mailto:caps@capsscientists.org)