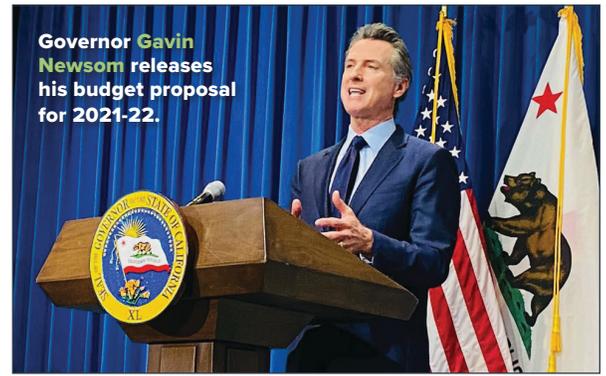


CAPS FILE

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET PLAN PROPOSES EARLY END TO PLP 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom on January 8 unveiled a State spending proposal that could end the Personal Leave Program 2020 (PLP 2020) one year sooner than expected. However, the details are subject to bargaining, steady revenues, and approval by the Legislature.



The State's better-than-expected finances also have implications for ongoing bargaining talks between CAPS and the Newsom Administration.

The Governor's plan to end PLP 2020 is part of a \$227 billion spending blueprint for Fiscal Year 2021-22 and includes \$164.5 billion from the General Fund. Despite the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, Newsom's plans for the coming fiscal year also anticipate a \$15.6 billion one-time budget surplus and a \$19 billion deposit into the State's reserve account. By comparison, the current 2020-21 State Budget authorized just \$202 billion in total spending, \$133 billion from the General Fund.

The robust revenue stream was not what financial forecasters anticipated last year in the shadow of the global health crisis. Millions of Californians had been thrown out of work by the response to COVID-19. Economists assumed the State had entered a prolonged recession. The State's finance analysts calculated the government needed to bridge an immediate \$54 billion deficit, with more shortfalls [anticipated](#) for more than one budget year. To address the emergency, the Governor and the Legislature made across-the-board cuts to State spending, including reductions in State employee compensation.

In response, CAPS and every other state-employee union bargained compensation cuts and agreed to defer scheduled salary increases knowing the Legislature was prepared to authorize furloughs. Members overwhelmingly ratified CAPS' Side Letter Agreement, under which Unit 10 employees have received 16 hours of PLP 2020 leave each month as compensation for a reduction in take-home pay. As a partial offset, the Agreement also suspended the 2.8% of salary that Unit 10 employees paid toward prefunding post-retirement health benefits through June 2022. In addition, the Agreement reduced members' retirement contributions by 0.5%. This reduction was scheduled for July 2021, but CAPS negotiated the earlier implementation date.

The CAPS Bargaining Team (CAPS Team) agreed to the painful terms, provided the State would end PLP 2020 if revenues rebounded.

Since then, many middle and high-income California residents have worked from home and paid taxes as usual. The stock market also has soared, so the State has collected billions of dollars from capital gains. Expanded unemployment and family leave benefits steadied consumer spending and related sales revenues. The result: The State took in funds at rates anticipated before the pandemic.

The unanticipated revenues left room for the Governor's budget proposal to consider ending PLP 2020 on the July 1 start of the 2021-22 fiscal year.

It also prompted questions during recent talks between the CAPS Team and CalHR when they recently resumed bargaining for a successor Memorandum of Understanding:

Had CalHR considered using part of the \$15.6 billion surplus to restore equity to State Scientists' salaries? Does talk about surplus money from increased revenues this Fiscal Year indicate that money is available now to help fund compensation increases for Unit 10? And how did the State arrive at \$19 billion projected to go to the reserve?

The CAPS Team told their CalHR counterparts in bargaining that before Governor Newsom

▶ [Continued on page 4...](#)

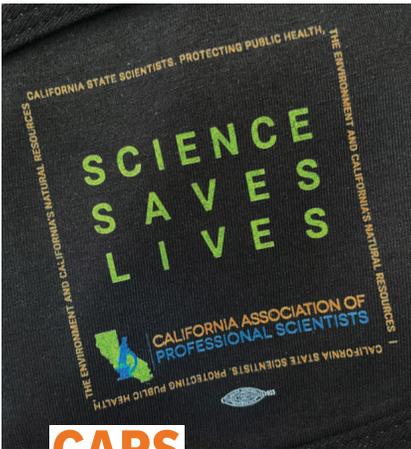
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CAPS MASKS & SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION

Calling all members who have received CAPS-branded “Science Saves Lives” masks! As a show of support for your union and life-saving science, please take a photo of yourself wearing your mask and post it on Twitter or Instagram with CAPS’ handle, @capsscientists. Or email your picture to caps@capsscientists.org, and staff can take it from there.

The masks have proven so popular with members that the initial stock has run out. **But fear not** if you missed the first round of giveaways. CAPS is gauging members’ demand and the feasibility of purchasing more. So, if you would like to receive an adult and/or child-size protective face mask – free of charge – and didn’t get one in the first round, please fill out [this form](#) to help CAPS determine how many masks to order.

Photo (above): CAPS members snatched up the first available supply of masks printed with this graphic.

CAPS ANNOUNCES QUARTERLY GRANT AWARDS

As one of the many benefits of membership, **CAPS’ Professional Development Grant Program** provides up to four quarterly **\$400 awards** to support scientific research and professional development activities that are not fully funded by the State. The Member Benefits Committee, which reviews applications, recently awarded 4th Quarter grants to these deserving members:

Fares Gerges, an Associate Health Physicist in the Brea office of Public Health’s Radiologic Health Branch, will use his \$400 award to partially offset the cost of a self-study online radiation safety officer course.

Associate Health Physicist **Tracy Jue** also works for the Radiologic Branch, but in Sacramento. Her winning application explained that she would use her \$400 grant to take an online preparatory course for taking a health physics certification exam later this year.

Kristal Raymond is a Research Scientist (Social/Behavioral) for the Department of Public Health in Sacramento. Her grant will help pay for training for certification in “Results-Based Accountability,” which is a method of planning to address social challenges, including those associated with COVID-19.

The \$400 grant **Michael Walgren** receives will pay coursework costs for arborist certification. The classes are provided by the International Society of Arboriculture. Michael is based in San Simeon as an Environmental Scientist for the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The Member Benefits Committee prefers disbursing awards among members in various state departments and agencies, to the extent possible. Four award recipients are chosen each January, April, July, and October for the prior quarter. You can find details about this popular members-only program and how to apply on the **CAPS Professional Development Grants** [page](#) at capsscientists.org.



JOIN CAPS LEADERS FOR VIRTUAL BOARD AND WORKSITE MEETINGS

CAPS leaders understand that accurate information, willing transparency, and effective communication educate members and build our union’s collective strength. That’s why every meeting of the Board of Directors is open to members who want to witness CAPS’ top leaders conduct official business or address the Board for up to three minutes.

With that in mind, CAPS encourages members to join the next **virtual Board of Directors (BOD) Quarterly Meeting** on **Saturday, February 20, at 9 a.m.** via Zoom. Registration is required using a members-only sign-up process that CAPS will email soon. You can also access the Draft Minutes from the November 7, 2020, BOD Meeting by logging into the members-only portal on capsscientists.org. CAPS will post a draft agenda link on that same webpage ahead of the meeting. Please email caps@capsscientists.org if you need assistance with the password.

CAPS also has scheduled “virtual worksite” meetings for **February 17, 18, and 19**, from **noon to 1 p.m.** Worksite meetings give members a chance to talk with CAPS Board Members about workplace concerns and union matters. Each meeting begins with a presentation about committee work and recent events that impact State Scientists and concludes with a Question and Answer session. Registration is required for this members-only activity, and attendees must follow the [CAPS Virtual Meeting Participant Expectations](#). CAPS will release registration details soon.

President's Column

Margarita Gordus



CAPS IN 2021

Bargaining, Budget, and Better Than Ever

Well, good riddance, 2020. Between the global pandemic, the State Budget crisis that wasn't (see the front page of the *CAPSule*), and overall social turmoil, I wasn't sorry to see the year end. Not that 2021 is going to be easy. Many challenges didn't go away with the mere flip of a calendar page.

Still, it seems like there are many reasons to be hopeful. Science is making a comeback in some circles that set public policy and make laws. Vaccination efforts appear to be taking hold, although it will be many months before we can say COVID-19 is under control. The State's budget picture looks bright for the coming year.

Here's how I see the year ahead for CAPS:

Bargaining will continue for a new Unit 10 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), but there's no deadline to reach a solution. The Bargaining Team is committed to bargaining the best MOU possible. Meanwhile, the MOU's Evergreen Clause remains in effect until the Legislature and CAPS members ratify a successor MOU.

CAPS will engage with Governor Newsom's administration and the Legislature to shape the 2021-2022 budget. Budgets reflect priorities, and CAPS will continue to advocate forcefully for State Scientists and scientific programs.

CAPS will unveil a new section on [capsscientists.org](https://www.capsscientists.org) to provide resources on activism, community engagement, and dealing with discrimination and harassment in the workplace. The new web section will fulfill a commitment by the CAPS Board of Directors when they unanimously and publicly stated support for Black Lives Matter last summer.

State Scientist Day will return to the Capitol this fall, assuming that schools can fully reopen and public health policies by then allow large gatherings.

The Outstanding Young Scientist program will also make its comeback on a date to be determined.

CAPS offices will reopen, subject to public health requirements. Until then, staff will continue to work remotely to serve members and conduct CAPS' business.

CAPS will continue member recruiting and retention efforts through a variety of channels and messages. (Remember, The CAPS Referral Program provides a \$50 reward to any CAPS member who recruits a new member, rank-and-file or supervisory. Details about how to claim the incentive award are on the back page of this *CAPSule* and at [capsscientists.org](https://www.capsscientists.org).)

As restrictions on travel and meetings lift, the Member Benefits Committee will return to funding conference travel through CAPS Professional Development Grants.

CAPS will roll out a plan for in-person worksite meetings when public-health rules allow it. We are eager to resume seeing members at tabling events and Q&A sessions around the State.

Meanwhile, CAPS leaders and staff will continue to hold virtual worksite meetings before each board meeting. The members-only sessions have been well-received, and CAPS leaders have gained valuable insight from interacting with State Scientists from all over California.

Of course, CAPS leaders will continue advancing your interests: Competitive pay for State Scientists, protecting your pension and benefits, preserving scientific jobs and programs, and providing top-notch workplace representation.

Looking ahead, I expect CAPS in 2021 will emerge stronger and more united than ever before. Thank you for supporting the only organization created by State Scientists, run by State Scientists, representing State Scientists. This year will once again prove that we are stronger together.

► ...continued from page 1

releases the May Budget Revision, they want to discuss restoring the reductions from PLP 2020 and the Unit 10 salary increase deferred in July. The constitutional deadline for the Legislature to enact a budget is June 15.

For now, the Governor's proposals to end PLP 2020 and other budget spending specifics are just that – proposals. Over the coming months, and with members' continued strong support, CAPS will vigorously advocate State Scientists' collective interests with the Newsom Administration and the Legislature.

CAPS-SPONSORED LIFE INSURANCE

Great Coverage, Great Price

One of the many benefits your CAPS membership provides is **\$5,000** of Group Term Life Insurance and **\$5,000** of Group Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance from [The Standard](#). But did you know that because you are a CAPS Member that you can purchase additional term insurance at group rates that are lower than if you bought the same coverage on your own?

Premiums for those policies are paid through the convenience of payroll deduction that – depending on your age, amount of coverage, and other details – can be just pennies each day. For example, a 49-year-old CAPS member can purchase **\$30,000** of Supplemental Life Insurance for as little as \$4.05 per month. That's **13 cents per day**, or roughly the cost of two sticks of gum.

And the insurance options The Standard makes available to CAPS Members include term life and accidental death and dismemberment policies of up to **\$490,000**, plus coverage for qualified dependents, all at low group rates.

Want more information or a quote tailored to your circumstances? CAPS' Insurance Administrator can answer questions about this members-only program over the phone at (415) 956-1344 or by responding to your email to insurance@capscientists.org. You will also find more details, a secure online application, downloadable forms, and a brochure by clicking [here](#).

By the Numbers

BUDGET PROPOSALS OF INTEREST TO STATE SCIENTISTS

\$ 1.5 Billion

The State's supplemental payment to increase CalPERS' pension funding status.

\$ 1 Billion

Funds a new coordinated forest health and fire prevention strategy that maximizes technology and science-based approaches.

\$ 300 Million

A one-time expenditure for toxic site cleanup and investigations of high-priority contaminated properties in impacted communities across the State, prioritized based on public health risk criteria.

\$ 616 Million

A one-time payment covering the 2020-21 retiree health care contributions State employees did not pay during the second half of 2020. For Unit 10 employees, the contribution was 2.8% of salary.

5 Seats

The number of seats on a new board proposed to oversee the Department of Toxic Substances Control.

5 Percent

The percentage of operating-expense cuts departments made this year that they must again realize in Fiscal Year 2021-22. The State urges expanding telework and shrinking office space to meet this goal.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Governor's Budget Plan Proposes Early End to PLP 2020
CAPS Masks & Social Media Promotion
CAPS Announces Quarterly Grant Awards
Join CAPS Leaders for Virtual Board and Worksite Meetings
CAPS in 2021
CAPS-Sponsored Life Insurance
Budget Proposals of Interest to State Scientists

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