

Director Eraina Ortega,

When I read in the most recent CAPS bargaining update that the State's team hasn't acknowledged the Unit 10 pay issue, I couldn't understand how that could be true. How is it possible that you and your representatives haven't confirmed this inexcusable issue after the previous administration began taking small, albeit inadequate steps, to address it? As you must know by now numerous individuals and organizations have lobbied to resolve the Unit 10 pay issue over the years, including the State's own Legislative Analyst Office. The LAO included it in at least two reports within the last few years and made a very specific recommendation to the legislature to "try to maintain *appropriate* pay differentials between rank-and-file and managerial classifications". Differentials that today exceed **50%** even when your own policies say they should be **10%**.

The Secretaries of Cal/EPA and the Natural Resources Agencies also identified the Unit 10 pay problems shortly after taking office and wrote to you about how it's affecting their ability to accomplish their missions. Their letters clearly outlined the history of the issue and the problems it's causing and appropriately asked you to fix it. Yet even with their input and that of the CAPS bargaining team, numerous members, and other internal and external stakeholders, the State still can't acknowledge there are Unit 10 salary issues?

When Governor Newsom first took office I and many of my colleagues were cautiously optimistic that he would recognize and fix egregious pay inequities, including ours. We were even more hopeful after he repeatedly made statements that suggests he's serious about dealing with inequalities. Here's a few that stood out to us:

- **"California's most acute preexisting condition remains income inequality."**
- **"We need to stay fixated on closing unacceptable disparities, that's one of the fundamental reasons I ran for governor in the first place."**
- **"We know that our strength comes from not what we preach, but from what we do."**

- *Our government will be progressive, principled, and always on the side of the people. This will take courage... **To me, courage means doing what is right even when it is hard.***
- ***We will stand up for what's right, and we will defend our people. My pledge to every Californian is this: no matter what comes at us, I will have your back!***

Given the long and well-documented history of the Unit 10 salary issue and the Governor's own admission that he ran to close unacceptable disparities, my colleagues and I are left wondering how there can be such a large disconnect between the Governor and his representatives that have been charged with learning about and resolving pay disparities like ours. Whenever I describe the pay discrepancy between environmental scientists and environmental engineers to someone that doesn't work for the state, they immediately get how wrong it is and express disbelief that it's gone on for so long.

I'm sure that even in "normal" times being the Director of CalHR is an arduous and thankless job that must seem nearly impossible to succeed in. I'm also certain the Covid-19 pandemic created many more problems that have demanded your ongoing attention and that only serve to make your position even more difficult. While I can appreciate the stressful and unrelenting nature of your position, not prioritizing the Unit 10 pay issue now would be a big mistake as it's an outsized problem that's been an impediment to the State accomplishing its environmental agenda for years.

Since the Unit 10 historical pay relationships were first disrupted in 2005, the State has gradually developed a reputation as an employer that doesn't respect or value its own scientists. And with each new contract, the State has consistently reaffirmed its position and made it abundantly clear that rank-and-file State Scientists are not a priority and basically expendable. Maybe I'm mistaken, but I want to believe that is not a message that Governor Newsom or anyone in his administration wants to continue sending.

With global warming, disease outbreaks, wildfires, invasive species, droughts, and a long list of other environmental and public health issues threatening our very existence, wouldn't it be wise to invest in the State's first line of defense against these existential threats now? These issues are only going to get worse in the

decades to come so isn't it finally time to fix State Scientist's salaries so that California can once again attract and retain the scientific talent it needs?

In closing, I want to let you know that I am very close to retirement and that restoring the historical pay relationships for rank-and-file scientists won't benefit me or many of my colleagues who are also closing out their careers. I am not urging you to solve our salary issues for my sake, but rather, for all the current and future State Scientists that are contemplating their careers and trying to decide if dedicating their lives to protecting human health and the environment in California makes good sense. Their futures will be strongly influenced by the decision you make, so I urge you to follow the Governor's advice and to "do what is right even when it's hard" and demonstrate that this new administration is truly "fixated on closing unacceptable disparities".

Sincerely,

Matthew McCarron

Matthew J. McCarron