

CAPSULE

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THE MANY BENEFITS OF CAPS MEMBERSHIP

As CAPS resumes bargaining for a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) this year, the key to success is solidarity. The higher the level of engagement by CAPS membership, the more robust our voice will be at the bargaining table, and the better positioned we are to advance our collective interests in the Capitol, courts, media, state agencies, and CalPERS.

Yet there also are personal benefits to joining CAPS as well. Here is a summary of the many individual benefits that are unavailable to non-members:

	Members	Non-Members
Representation during:		
Investigatory Interviews	Yes	No
Negative Performance Evaluations	Yes	No
Performance Issues	Yes	No
Promotional Issues	Yes	No
Merit Appeals	Yes	No
Exam Appeals	Yes	No
Legal Representation during:		
Adverse Actions	Yes	No
Dismissals	Yes	No
Suspensions	Yes	No
Salary Reductions	Yes	No
Rejections During Probation	Yes	No
Unlawful Appointments	Yes	No
CAPS Communications		
<i>CAPSule</i>	Yes	No
<i>Weekly News</i>	Yes	No
<i>Bargaining Updates</i>	Yes	No
CAPS Meetings		
Worksite Meetings	Yes	No
Board Meetings	Yes	No
Other Benefits		
Contract Voting Rights	Yes	No
CAPS Board Election Voting Rights	Yes	No
Bargaining and Other Surveys	Yes	No
Free & Discounted Life Insurance	Yes	No
Scholarships	Yes	No
Consumer Discounts	Yes	No

Do you have questions about your CAPS member benefits? CAPS has answers. Please visit capsscientists.org/benefits, contact your closest CAPS office by phone, or email your inquiry to caps@capsscientists.org.



STATE BUDGET UPDATE

Governor Gavin Newsom on January 10 released a \$284 billion budget proposal for the 2022-23 fiscal year that anticipates a \$45.7 billion surplus. It also includes \$10 billion in new spending on what his office called “five of California’s biggest challenges: COVID-19, climate change, homelessness, inequality, and keeping our streets safe.”

The budget also includes \$770.5 million (\$377.8 million General Fund) for increased employee compensation, health care costs for active state employees, and the State’s share of retirement health care prefunding contributions. “Included in these costs are collectively bargained salary and benefit increases resulting from contract and side letter negotiations,” according to the summary. “Funding is also included for 2023 calendar year increases in health care and dental premiums and enrollment.”

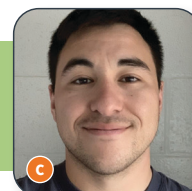
The salary figures do not specify set-asides for Unit 10 or any of the other five units whose contracts or side letter agreements are expired or will expire in summer 2022.

The plan would pad the state’s cash reserves and pay down debts. It marks the ninth consecutive year that the January budget proposal has anticipated surplus tax revenues for the State.

CAPS Bargaining Team (CAPS Team) is well aware of all these facts as they resume discussions with the Newsom administration for a new MOU. The CAPS Team and CalHR, which bargains on behalf of the Governor, resumed meetings in mid-January. Please look for *CAPS Bargaining Update* emails, sent only to CAPS members, for the latest news from the bargaining table. In addition, you can find CAPS’ password-protected archive of *Bargaining Updates*, accessible only to members, at capsscscientists.org/caps-bargaining-updates.

CAPS ANNOUNCES GRANT WINNERS

Four times each year, CAPS’ Member Benefits Committee awards up to four Professional Development Grants of \$400 to support members’ scientific research and professional development activities that the State does not fully fund. The Committee recently awarded 4th quarter grants these four deserving CAPS members:



Moytri Roy Chowdhury (not pictured), a Research Scientist III for Public Health’s Food & Drug Branch, received a grant to help publish a genome sequence associated with food crops in the *Genome Announcements Journal*.

a. Scott Coffin, who works as a Research Scientist III (Chemical Sciences) at the State Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento, will use his grant to purchase materials for a project that differentiates microplastics from other materials and discerns how they get into the environment.

b. Arthur Heredia, a Parks and Recreation Environmental Scientist in Gorman, is studying the movement and habitat usage of the Blainville’s Horned Lizard. He will use his CAPS grant to purchase radio transmitters to monitor the increasingly rare lizards.

c. Jason Traina, an Associate Hazardous Materials Specialist based in Soledad with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, plans to use his Professional Development Grant to pay coursework to become certified in confined-space reuse.

CAPS makes a total of \$1,600 in grants available to deserving members each quarter. Recipients are chosen in January, April, July, and October, so applications should be submitted before those months to be eligible for the subsequent selection. Once submitted, applications remain eligible for consideration for two quarters.

For more details about CAPS’ Professional Development Grants and how to apply for this members-only benefit, please go to capsscscientists.org/application/benefits/grant. Still have questions? Don’t hesitate to contact CAPS staff at caps@capsscscientists.org or by calling your nearest CAPS office.



CALL FOR SACRAMENTO STEM FAIR JUDGES

The Sacramento Regional STEM Fair, one of several science-education programs that CAPS sponsors, is seeking judges for this year’s event. Unfortunately, organizers have not decided whether the Fair will be in-person or virtual due to the pandemic. However, registered judges will be informed to allow for as much planning as possible once that is determined. To learn more about judging and to register, please go to sacstemfair.org/judges.html. In addition, you can find more about the Fair and its long history of benefitting junior high and high school students at sacstemfair.org.

President's Column

Margarita Gordus



CAPS' STORY

As we start the New Year with many new members recently joining CAPS, I thought this would be an appropriate column to tell our union's story, our philosophy, how we operate, and what makes everything possible.

In 1984, seven years after the Ralph C. Dills Act allowed state employees to unionize, the California Association of Professional Scientists was created by State Scientists, for State Scientists, and run by State Scientists.

It was a challenging birth. After the courts settled years of Dills Act litigation, the government divided the state workforce into "bargaining units" of employees with similar jobs. State Scientists went into Bargaining Unit 10.

In 1981, each bargaining unit's members voted on their representation. Some voted to create their own unions. Most, including Unit 10, joined big umbrella unions such as Service Employees International Union or the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, believing the larger organizations brought representational heft.

But it didn't work out that way for Unit 10. Instead, the umbrella union's larger units and broader goals overshadowed State Scientists' priorities. After three years, the scientists broke away to form CAPS, knowing they would more effectively represent themselves. Those founders cited three principles that still guide us: professionalism, independence, and responsible advocacy. State Scientists would never again answer to a larger union or be compelled to support its agenda.

In 1990, the Excluded Employees Bill of Rights provided representation for supervisors and managers, and CAPS welcomed them into the fold.

Because CAPS is an independent union run by members who volunteer their time, the Board of Directors employs staff to handle daily business operations. CAPS' talented, experienced professionals also provide expert consulting services in areas that include bargaining, labor relations, political and government advocacy, legal counsel, communications, and media relations.

Meanwhile, CAPS relies on a dedicated volunteer corps of Local Representatives at worksites statewide to facilitate communication between the Board, staff, and members at their worksites. They disseminate information from the Board, assist with worksite meetings, and help bring new members to CAPS, among other duties. It's a vital job, and we are always seeking members with a heart for this crucial work. If you are interested in becoming a Local Rep, please go to <https://capsscscientists.org/get-involved/caps-local-rep/> for more information and an application.

It all starts with engaged members who have chosen CAPS' representation. They have chosen to join their fellow members in unity and strength to protect their rights as state employees and State Scientists. The solidarity that pulled together our founders nearly 40 years ago still drives us today. That doesn't mean it's always easy. CAPS is a democracy. Every member has a voice. Sometimes we disagree. But our common bonds are stronger than anything – or anyone – that might divide us. That was true in 1984. It is true in 2022. And I believe it will continue to drive CAPS forward for the next four decades and beyond.

MEET CAPS 2021-23 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

State Scientists who volunteer to serve on committees are key to CAPS success. This list details the membership and duties of three more committees that do important work on behalf of all CAPS members.

Membership & Communications

Oversees CAPS' publications for members and matters concerning membership, such as recruitment.



Chair:
Alice Nash
Environmental
Scientist
CDFW –
Los Alamitos

Members:

Kelley Aubushon
Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor),
CDFA – Tulare

Daniel Ellis
Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist),
SWRCB – Sacramento

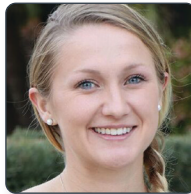
Monty Larson
Environmental Scientist, CDFW – Fortuna

Mia Roberts
Environmental Scientist, CDFW – West Sacramento

Kris Wiese
Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist),
CDFW – Ontario

Public Relations

Responsible for the production of materials, media campaigns, and events to further the public image of State Scientists and CAPS.



Chair:
Jacqueline Tkac
Environmental
Scientist
CCWQCB –
San Luis Obispo

Members:

Daniel Ellis
Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist),
SWRCB – Sacramento

Mia Roberts
Environmental Scientist, CDFW – West Sacramento

David Rist
Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist),
DTSC – Berkeley

Itzia Rivera
Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist),
CWC – Sacramento

Supervisors

Responsible for addressing unit-wide supervisory, managerial, and confidential member issues, and negotiating benefits through the meet-and-confer process with the state as provided for under applicable state laws and rules.



Chair:
Kelley Aubushon
Senior Environmental
Scientist (Supervisor)
CDFA –
Tulare

Members:

Edie Marshall
Research Scientist Supervisor II (Various Specialties),
CDFA – Sacramento

Gina Ford
Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor),
CNRA – Rancho Cordova

Rebecca Garwood
Senior Environmental Program Manager I (Supervisor),
CDFW – Eureka

Scott Bauer
Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor),
CDFW – Eureka

FILE A STATE TELEWORK AGREEMENT TO RECEIVE UP TO \$50 PER MONTH

With the Legislature's return to work in January, funding will soon become available for monthly telework stipends of up to \$50 that CAPS bargained for Unit 10 employees.

That is why every State Scientist who works remotely, even if it's less than half the time, should fill out a [Telework Agreement \(STD 200\)](#) to qualify for the extra funds. Here's how the September 29, 2021, Side Letter Agreement between CAPS and the State works:

"Remote-centered" employees (those who work at least 50% of the time from an alternate work location) qualify for a \$50-per-month stipend to offset work-related costs. Employees working less than 50% from a remote site are "office-centered" staff are eligible for a \$25 monthly stipend. (Employees who do not telework do not qualify for a stipend.)

Unit 10 supervisors and managers should also formalize their telework designations by filing a Telework Agreement or with an email that includes your schedule and your designation as either remote- or office-centered. The CAPS Supervisory Committee is working to gain the benefit for managerial employees, in keeping with the rank-and-file Side Letter Agreement.

Stipends are retroactive to October 1, 2021. After legislative approval of a funding bill and Governor Newsom's signature, the State will disburse the money. Meanwhile, departments will be developing their own telework rules and procedures well into 2022 under the terms of the [Statewide Telework Policy](#) released in October 2021. Look for members-only CAPS Update emails and CAPSule for more information in 2022.

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