

April 19, 2022

Subject: Pay Equity for California State Environmental Scientist

Dear CalHR,

California State Environmental Scientists deserve pay equity now.

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

As stated in Rachel Becker's February 2022, Cal Matters article, "'Morale killer': California scientists battle over pay disparities," "Scientists working for California are key to food safety, cleaning up hazardous waste and protecting wildlife, wetlands and water. Their work informs the state's efforts to combat climate change, drought and wildfires."<sup>1</sup>

The California Institute of Biodiversity, and co-signed organizations, state in their January 7, 2022 letter that, "We fear that glaring inequities in state Scientist compensation give the appearance California does not value the scientist who are most essential to realizing the vision of a resilient future driven by science."<sup>2</sup>

The average annual gross salary of the California State Environmental Scientist is \$81,623.62 (\$6,801.97/month). According to the Housing Affordability Index, California Housing Affordability Update (Q4-2021) Report, the median home price for a single-family home in California is \$797,470, which requires an estimated monthly payment (including taxes and insurance) of \$3,700 and a minimum qualifying income of \$148,000<sup>3</sup>. This is more than double the \$346,900 national median home sales price for 2021<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, California has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest rent in the country out of 56 states and territories<sup>5</sup>.

In San Luis Obispo County:

- The average salary of a California State Environmental Scientist is \$83,840.13 (\$6,986.68/month).
- The median home price for a single-family home is \$802,000, which requires an estimated monthly payment (including taxes and insurance) of \$3,720 and a minimum qualifying income of \$148,800.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://calmatters.org/environment/2022/02/california-scientists-battle-pay-disparities/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZJBtxuFaAvf6tjEy5fVnDlyz9dK\\_x3FC/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZJBtxuFaAvf6tjEy5fVnDlyz9dK_x3FC/view)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.car.org/marketdata/data/haitraditional>

<sup>4</sup> [Home prices in 2021 rose 16.9%, the highest on record - CNN](#)

<sup>5</sup> [2022 Fair Market Rent in California | RentData.org](#)

- The rental market was ranked number one for highest rent burden (most unaffordable rental costs) across the United States.<sup>6</sup>
- The overall cost of living makes San Luis Obispo County the second least affordable small metro area in the entire nation.<sup>7</sup>

The value of California State Environmental Scientists is clear. California State Environmental Scientists deserve pay equity now. Without pay equity, the State of California will find it increasingly difficult to attract and retain a scientific workforce that can afford to work and live in the state.

We are asking for the Newsom Administration to acknowledge their commitment to science and to us, California's Environmental Scientists by ending the pay inequity now.

Respectfully,

Julia Dyer, Regional Monitoring, 22 years of service

Jamie Pratt, Irrigated Lands Program, 3 years of service

Alyssa Bucci, Cannabis Regulatory Program, 4 years of service

Paula Richter, Irrigated Lands Program, 7 years of service

Genevieve Safi Holdridge, Ph.D., 401 Program, 7 months of service

Kathryn McNeill, Grants Program Manager, 20 years of service

Mark Cassady, 401 Program, 4.5 years of service

Ryan Lee, Ph.D., Cannabis Regulatory Program, 5 months of service

Larry M. Harlan, TMDL Program, 22 years of service

Melissa J. Daugherty, Regional Monitoring and Assessment, 6 years of service

Kathleen Hicks, 401 Program, 3 years of service

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<sup>6</sup> [Cities Paying the Most in Rent - Insurify](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Another California city is now one of the least affordable places to live in \(sfgate.com\)](#)