

Dear CalHR,

I am one of the Environmental Scientists in the Department of Cannabis Control. I feel disrespected, unappreciated, and taken for granted.

Without prompt action to address this pay inequity, we anticipate adverse impacts to our program in terms of hiring, morale, and retention. We urge the Newsom Administration to correct this pay disparity as soon as possible.

The Environmental Scientists of the Department of Cannabis Control are diverse and uniquely equipped to sustain the Department's values. We are competent and collaborative. The Environmental Scientists and Senior Environmental Scientists possess advanced degrees and extensive experience in such fields as agriculture, toxic substances, botany, chemistry, molecular biology, microbiology, food science, and public health. Diversity in perspective is essential for productive teamwork and informed decision-making.

Compliance and Licensing needs its Environmental Scientists to successfully carry out its mandate. Environmental Scientists in Compliance achieve their goals both in the field and in office to ensure all cannabis and manufactured cannabis products are being produced in compliance with the regulations. Further, the technical knowledge required of the Department's scientists helps them navigate the nebulous space between technical assessment and regulatory implementation. The program risks losing this breadth of experience affecting regulatory functions due to potential loss in institutional knowledge and other typical productivity losses from turn-over.

The Environmental Scientists of the Laboratory Services unit have another critical role for the Department of Cannabis Control. Environmental Scientists in Laboratory Services are all former experienced technical scientists from environmental testing laboratories, production quality control laboratories, and other fields that require completion of compliance testing to standards and practices of both state and federal agencies. For the voters of Proposition 64, a crucial aspect of justifying regulated cannabis was assurance that licensed retailers and other licensees are providing products that are safe for public health and safety. No other agency or department has displayed the political will to undertake the mandate to educate and enforce best practices of cannabis compliance testing laboratories in California. Any challenge to the foundation of public health and safety of regulated cannabis threatens the long-term success of the licensed cannabis ecosystem.

The Environmental Scientists of the Department of Cannabis Control are the best, most diverse team to support the technical oversight of regulated cannabis in California. The classification series needs to regain competitiveness to attract and retain top talent that can further its mission. Scientists working for the Federal Government and for counties across California earn significantly higher salaries than those working for the Department of Cannabis Control. The maximum salary for a San Francisco County Senior Environmental Specialist is 21.4% more than the maximum for

the Department of Cannabis Control's Senior ES position, and the salary for a Federal Scientist (GS-13) is 32.33% more. In addition, the Research Scientists and Environmental Scientists in Laboratory Services work in a capacity more like Consumer Safety Officers and Life Scientists in the GS11 – GS14 pay scale series.

All we ask is for pay equity. Our equivalents in both the public and private sector are sharing the experience of economic burden. However, it appears that all these metrics are unheard of by the State's bargaining team.

This is an opportunity for the Newsom Administration to demonstrate its **commitment** to investing in all avenues of **supporting the regulated cannabis ecosystem**. This is a one of many ways for the Newsom Administration to foster support for regulated California cannabis starting with Governor Newsom leading the Blue Ribbon Commission on Marijuana Policy. The Department of Cannabis Control's Environmental Scientists work hard every day to ensure that California cannabis meets and exceeds quality standards and health and safety standards. We are enthusiastic about Department of Cannabis Control's many successes to date and know that more equitable compensation will help Department of Cannabis Control attract and retain the diverse and innovative scientists needed to lead the nation in regulated cannabis.

Please invest in us as we have invested in the Department of Cannabis Control.