



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

April 10, 2024

Dear Cabinet Secretaries,

I write to provide a further update about our ongoing conversations around the Administration's efforts to innovate and evolve how the state's workers get work done effectively on behalf of Californians in a hybrid environment.

Nearly four years have passed since the COVID-19 pandemic precipitated change. Although about half of state workers were in jobs that required them to continue coming into the office, others shifted to a hybrid model or full-time telework. Based on our experience and research that has emerged during that time, we are in a different place today as a society and as state agencies serving the public.

The Governor's Office previously directed all agencies and departments within the Administration to regularly evaluate and update their telework policies based on their individual operational needs. We also made clear that the Administration believes there are significant benefits to in-person work—enhanced collaboration, cohesion, and communication, better opportunities for mentorship, particularly for workers newer to the workforce, and improved supervision and accountability—that should be balanced with the benefits and increased flexibility that telework provide, through a hybrid approach. To this point, however, we have not mandated a minimum number of in-person days that agencies and departments should implement for state staff.

I appreciate the efforts by many agencies and departments to reevaluate their policies. A number of agencies successfully implemented hybrid policies with minimum in-person-day expectations last year, with minimal disruptions. Others announced earlier this year that they are transitioning to hybrid approaches in the coming weeks, while some have yet to make any changes to their policies.

Unfortunately, the varied approaches have created confusion around expectations and are likely to exacerbate inconsistencies across agencies and

1

departments. Accordingly, we have determined that it is now necessary to direct all agencies and departments within the Administration that provide telework as an option for employees to implement a hybrid telework policy with an expectation of at least two in-person days per week, with case-by-case exceptions to be considered as detailed below.

This approach will ensure all agencies and departments experience the benefits of in-person work, while still affording staff the benefits and flexibility of telework. Agencies and departments should continue to consider their individual operational needs in implementing this directive. Employee requests for more than three telework days per week should continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis (e.g., in requests for reasonable accommodation), as required by the applicable MOU, and approved or denied based on individual circumstances and the specific needs and objectives of the department. I also want to make clear that agencies and departments that have already implemented or are in the midst of implementing a transition to hybrid work consistent with this directive should continue to do so.

CalHR will notice our labor partners about this directive and its implementation date of June 17, 2024. Agencies and departments are expected to implement this directive on that date. This implementation timeframe does not apply to departments that have already announced an earlier implementation date for their return to office policy.

As I have said, we continue to support telework and believe this transition to a hybrid structure will promote greater collaboration and cohesion across our teams that will enhance our ability to serve all Californians effectively. We will continue to evaluate this approach in the coming weeks and months, and we may make further adjustments in the future. I look forward to continued dialogue on this.

Sincerely,



Ann Patterson
Cabinet Secretary