

Telework Policy Meet and Confer

CALEPA

APRIL 4, 2024

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More than 1,000 State Scientists directly impacted

State Scientist Salaries are the SAME since BEFORE the pandemic

- State Scientists (BU10) are enduring period of extended budgetary hardship
- Much of the current teleworking workforce accepted positions on the BASIS of telework and were recruited from a larger geographic area
- RTO makes the situation of poor salaries worse
- Surprise RTO policy change is invoking betrayal, disillusionment, resentment
- The best workers are vulnerable and will be lost
 - CalEPA already affected by CalHR neglect of BU10, low morale and high turnover
 - Under conditions of hiring freeze, jobs will remain unfilled
 - CalEPA recruiting and current workforce will diminish

Telework is effective and beneficial

Telework does not compromise operations

- Mental load of commuting and setting up for hoteling decreases productivity, whereas teleworking allows for more production and less stress
- For the last 4 years, state scientists have demonstrated they are effectively communicating, collaborating, providing mentorship, and team building by teleworking - allowing the state to reduce its office footprint and expenses
- State scientists and their managers have used their professional judgement to meet in person when they see a clear benefit. Current policy allows an optimal mix of remote and in-office work
- Teleworking scientists currently serve in the communities where they live, enabling CalEPA to recruit from much larger talent pool

Impacts on Air Quality and Climate

- Addressing the climate crisis is one of California's highest priorities, particularly at CalEPA
- Maximum telework is one of the most effective ways to accomplish clean air and climate goals
- As of November 2023, DGS reported:
 - **1,020,000,000 commuting miles** saved
 - **370,985 metric tons** of carbon dioxide emissions avoided

Climate Commitments

- California isn't on track to meet its climate change mandates — a new analysis says it's not even close
(CalMatters, March 18, 2024)
- **RTO is not a durable policy**
- California will fail to meet its ambitious mandates for combating climate change unless the state almost triples its rate of reducing greenhouse gases through 2030



Financial Impacts on the Employee

State Scientist Salaries

- Unchanged since before pandemic
 - Increasingly difficult and untenous economic challenges
 - >40% lower salaries than peers (in BU9 and beyond)
 - >60% lower salaries than immediate supervisors
 - CalHR refuses to adjust accordingly, already resulting in low morale and high turnover
- Housing without any GeoPay adjustment
 - Telework has allowed Scientists to live in less costly areas
 - CalHR has repeatedly rejected geopay adjustments, squeezing scientists out of living in areas of employment

**The ability to telework 100% is critical
to mitigate rising and increasingly unaffordable
living costs**

CAPS Scientists Can't Afford RTO

Avoiding commuting costs is the only thing allowing many to keep working for CalEPA BDOs (due to inflation and no pay increases).

- Commuting costs:
 - As of November 2023, DGS reported:
 - *\$221,000,000 saved in gas*
 - *\$680,000,000 total vehicle expenses saved*
 - Parking rates have gone up, but our salaries haven't.
 - Even discounted rates have climbed.

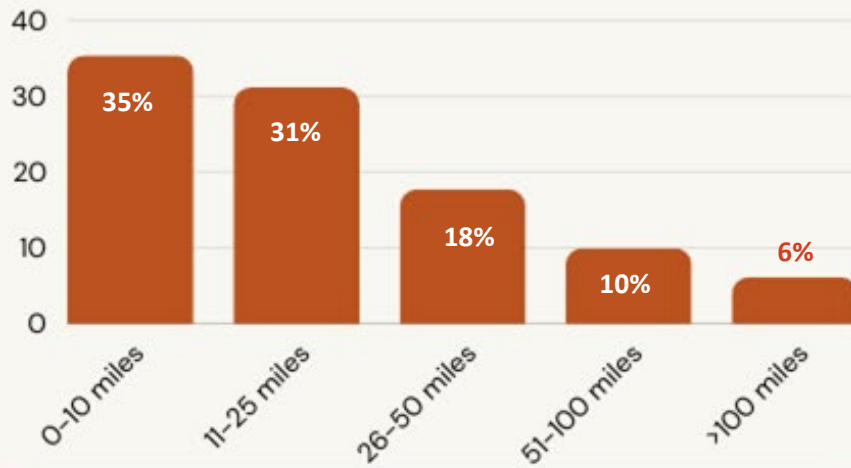
Public Transit: Not a Magic Bullet for State Scientists

There are several issues with the notion that most employees will use public transit.

- Many new employees aren't located near their duty stations.
- Many existing employees were priced out and moved farther away from the office due to the switch to full-time telework.
- The majority of state scientists have a one-way commute time between 20-60 minutes (80 minutes to 4 hours at 2x/wk. RTO).
- 89.1% of scientists primarily drive to the office, (5.7% use public transit, 2.5% bike, and 1.6% walk).
- CAPS doesn't have the improved transit subsidy.
- It's a personal and information security risk.
- Data to support commuting using alternative modes of transportation are outdated.

CAPS Telework Survey

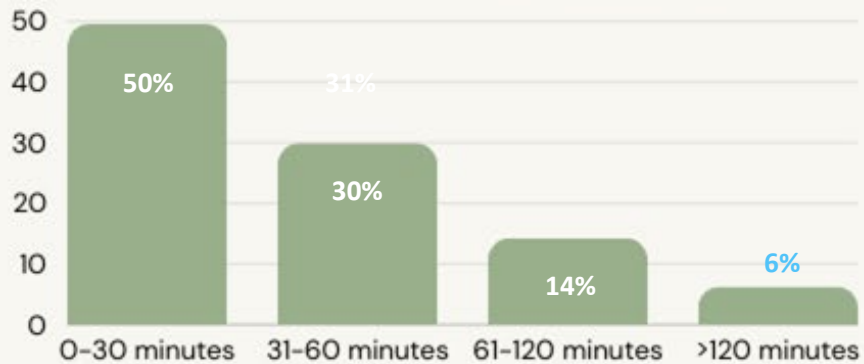
One-Way Commute Distance to Reporting Location



Transportation Method



One-Way Commute Time to Reporting Location



Safe and Reliable Public Transportation for Commute



Total Rank-and-File Respondents: 1,895
Unit-wide information

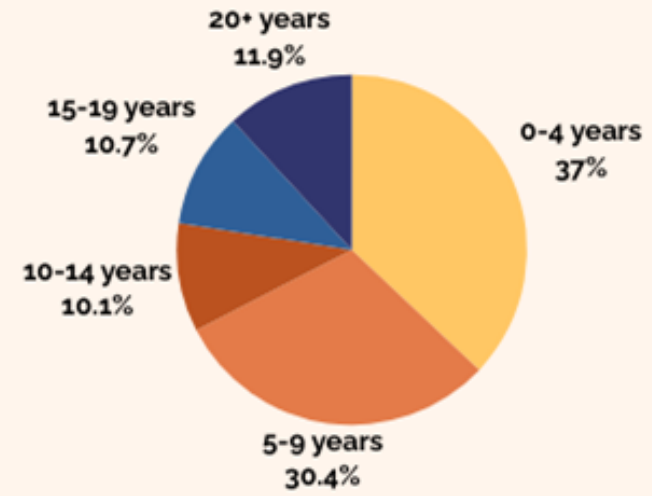
Bait and Switch

- New employees took positions with the understanding of 100% telework, foregoing other higher paying positions
- From the CAPS Telework Survey Respondents - nearly 37% have never experienced anything other than nearly full-time telework
- 57% of Safer Consumer Products (DTSC) respondents applied or accepted their position because they felt telework was a full-time option
- Given recent LAO and Governor's Budget reports, when employees leave, positions may be unfulfilled due to possible future hiring freezes
 - Sweeping vacant positions lead to a reductions in the size and reach of current programs
- This policy breaks the trust of both new and existing employees - this will further impact employee morale.
 - Not the actions of an employer of choice

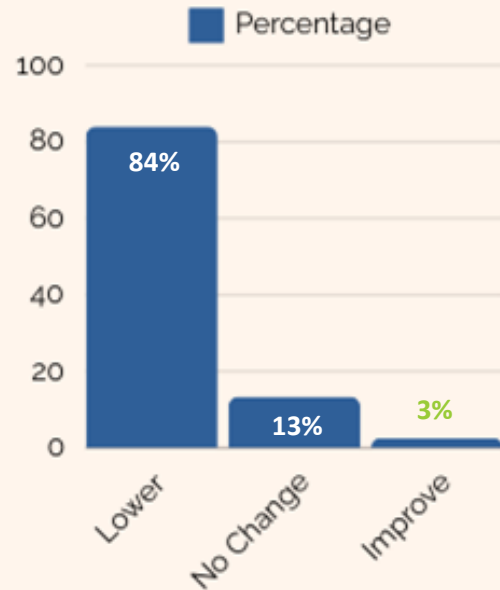
CAPS TELEWORK SURVEY

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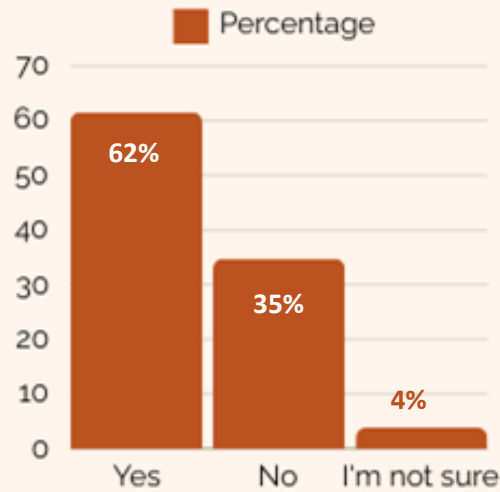
Years of State Service



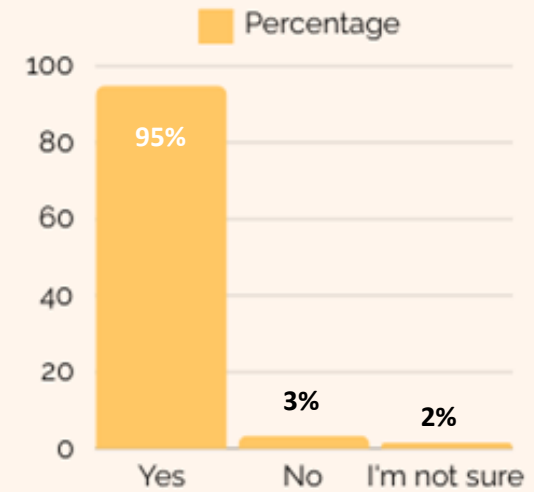
Change in Morale Should Telework Change



Influence of Telework on Entry or Staying in State Service



Ability to perform current duties remotely with same effectiveness



Significant change to working conditions

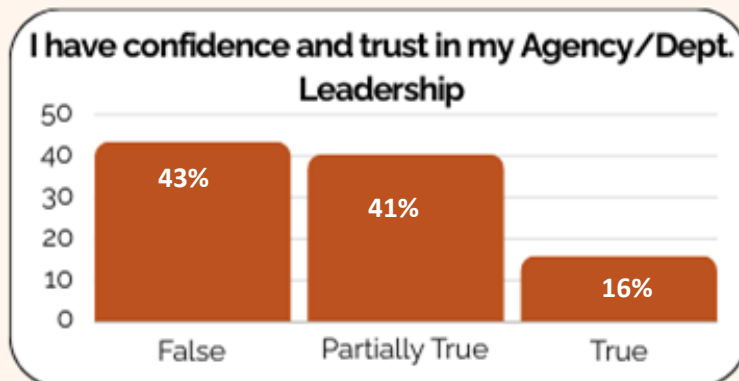
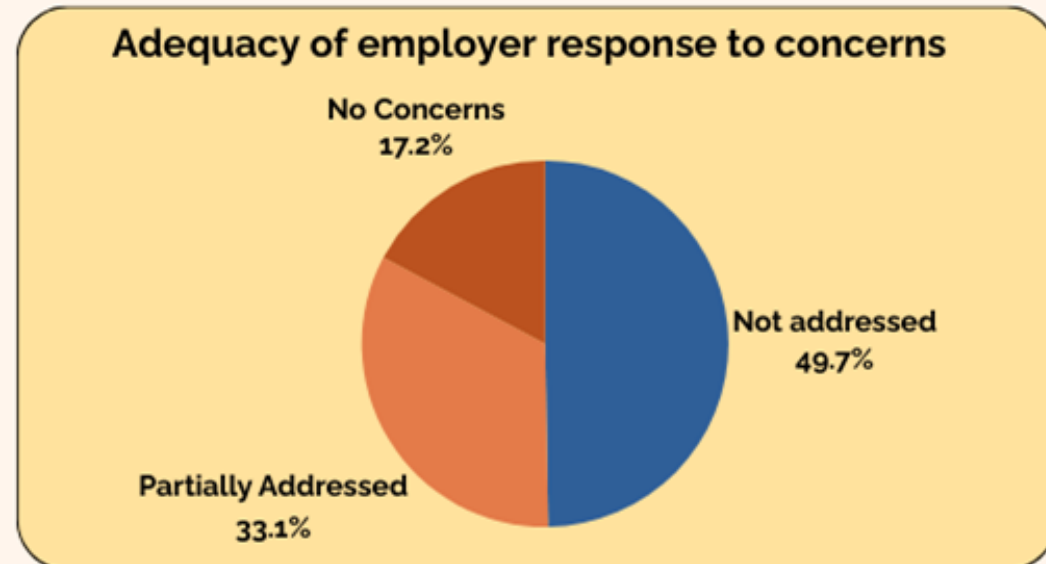
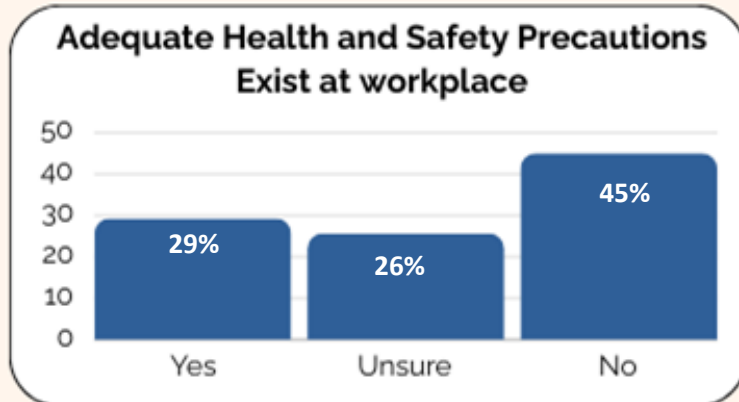
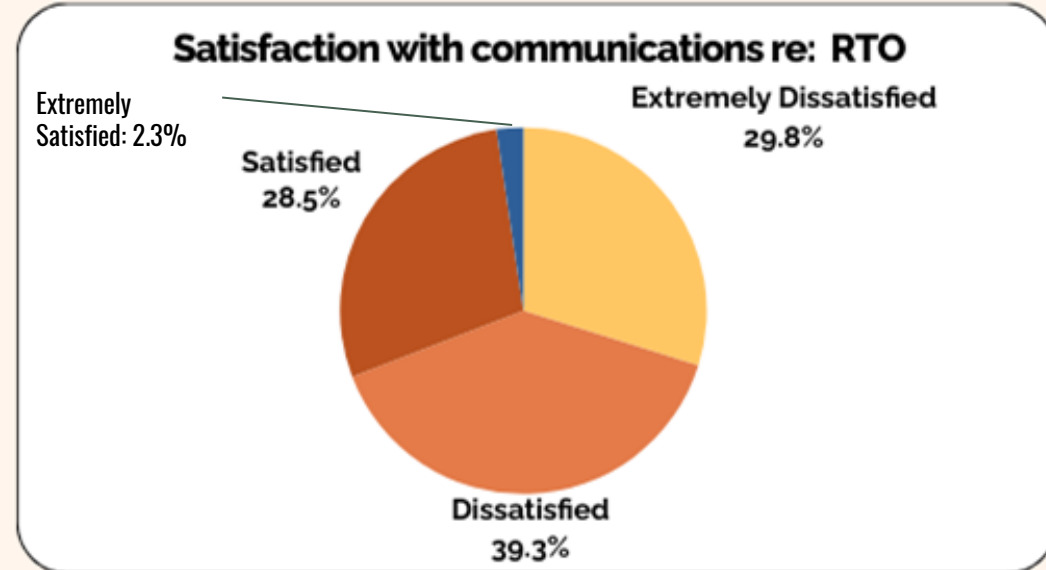
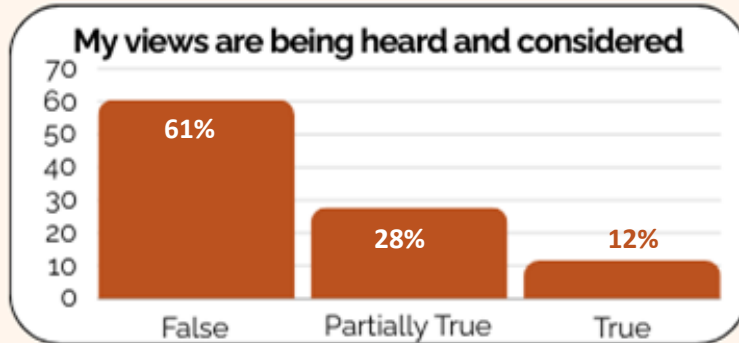
- Reporting in-office without a cause creates a demand for unpaid employee time via commute times
- Communicable diseases in an in-person environment creates potential health hazards and result in more sick leave
- Virtual meetings are now the norm, which will continue. Having virtual meetings in the office are often disruptive to co-workers
- Teleworkers have invested in their home office space which is better than in-office conditions (e.g., more ergonomic chairs; additional, larger computer screens; better lighting; etc.)
- Asking for employees to go back to an in-office world that no longer exists
- Equity/EJ implications

Resentment And Disillusionment

- State scientists have been marginalized, underpaid and degraded for too long, and this coupled with a mandatory in-office requirement poses a huge threat to CalEPA's ability to attract and retain the qualified scientific workforce that CalEPA needs to accomplish its mission: restore, protect and enhance the environment, and to ensure public health, environmental quality, and economic vitality.
- This administration purportedly supports and relies on science, but arbitrarily requiring an in-office requirement contradicts what science has concluded about telework.

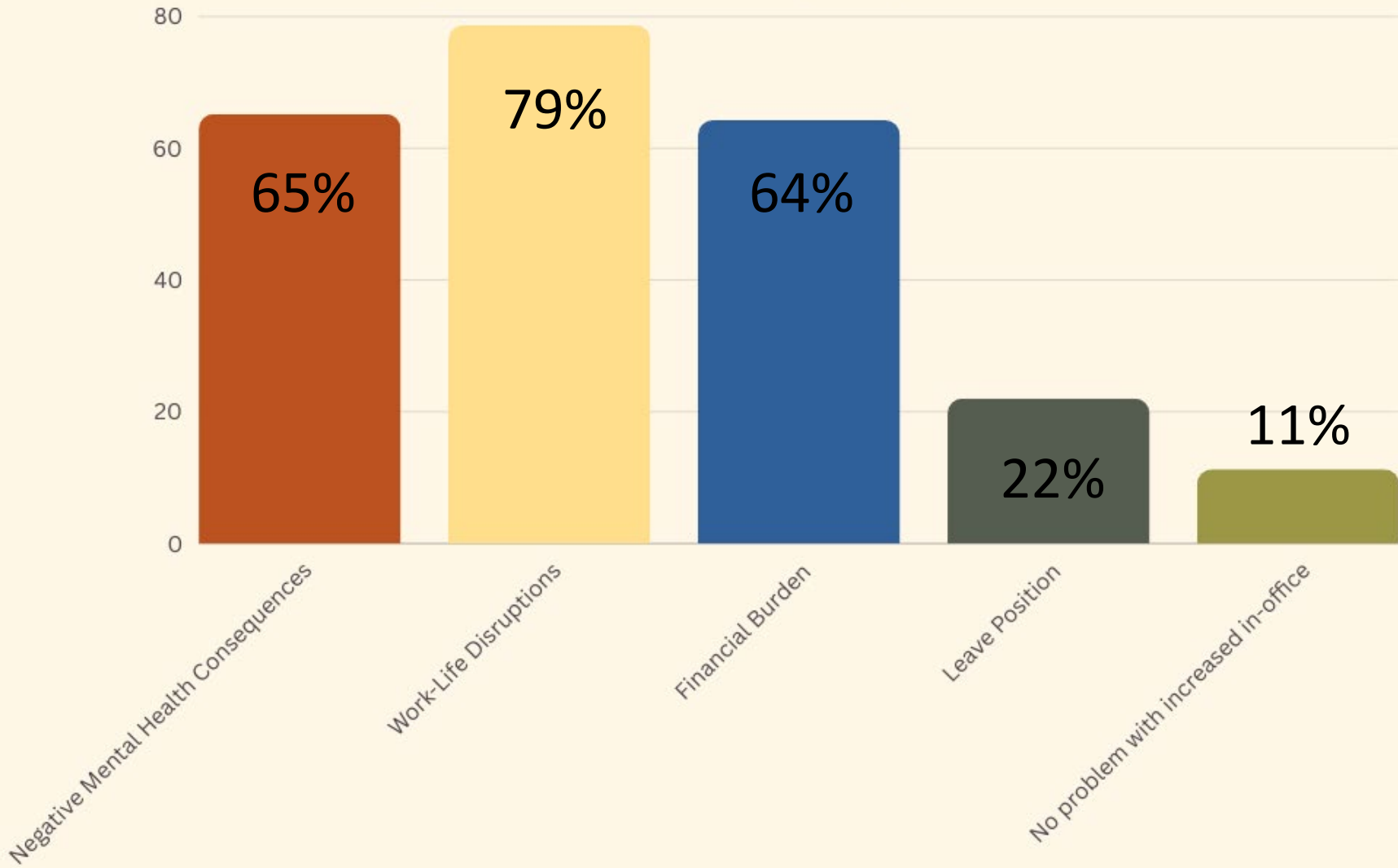
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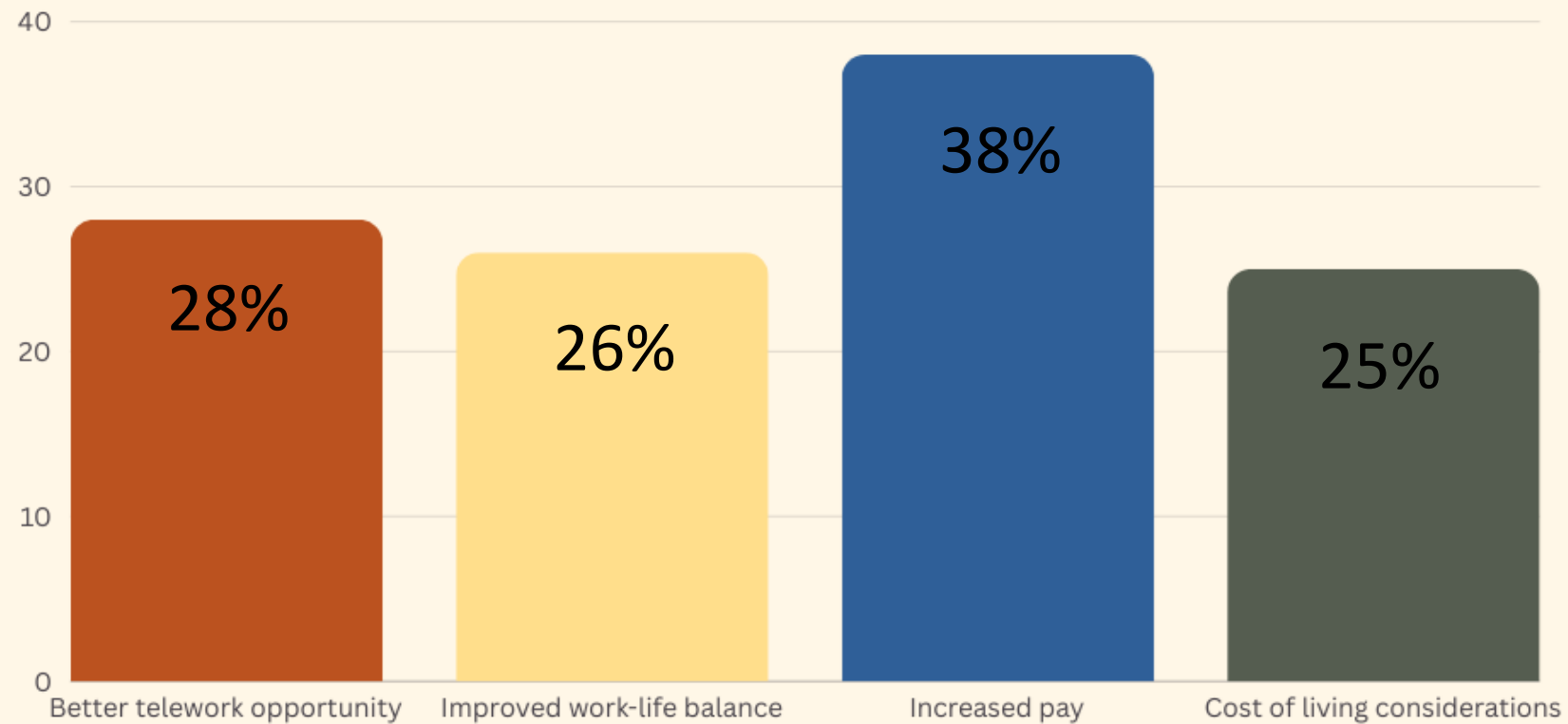
CAPS TELEWORK SURVEY

Consequences of Mandatory Days in Office



CAPS TELEWORK SURVEY

Self-Reported Reasons for Leaving State Service, should Telework options be limited



DGS on Telework: “fullest extent possible”

CAPS is in full support of DGS’s Statewide Telework Policy which states that employees should be able to telework to the fullest extent possible

Our CAPS membership is widely and forcefully against a prescriptive, arbitrary minimum number of in-office days at CalEPA, especially when members in other agencies report no benefit to mandated in-office days

Conclusions

The last four years have made evident:

Flexible teleworking offers substantial benefits

- Improved life-work balance
- Enhanced employee satisfaction
- Increased environmental stewardship
- Significant cost savings to employee
 - Commute costs
 - Housing costs
- Significant cost savings to employer (in times of massive budget deficits and cutbacks!)
 - Lower employee turnover
 - More productivity
 - Less administration re: hoteling resources and in person logistics, etc.
 - Less office space needed

Conclusions

The new RTO policy creates many more problems than it solves, and these problems are much more significant

- Decrease in productivity
- Higher costs to both state and employees
- Increase in air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions
- Negative health consequences, delay of reasonable accommodations and potential influx
- State scientists to seek jobs elsewhere
- Deeply disrupts lives that depend on the flexibility that telework provides
- Compromises trust and surrenders position of CalEPA as “employer of choice”

Conclusions

No problem has been identified that is fixed by mandating a minimum number of in-office days for Unit 10 scientists

Scientists already know when it is a benefit to be in the office and are currently doing so

Departments benefit by continuing current telework policy without change