

Hi Paul,

CAPS-UAW is in receipt of your May 14 request to return to the bargaining table to revisit the cost of State employee compensation.

CAPS-UAW represents over 6,000 State Scientists who develop solutions for life-threatening diseases facing the public, safeguard our wildlife, and ensure the protection and safety of the public and California's natural resources.

In August 2024, following four years without a contract and no salary increases in 2022 or 2023, CAPS-UAW reached a 3-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State of California. This agreement was negotiated in good faith. A historic 91% of rank-and-file CAPS-UAW members participated in the ratification vote, and 97% of participants voted to ratify. The MOU was then approved and signed into law by the Legislature and the Governor through SB 181. The MOU includes meaningful strides toward closing the gender and like-pay-for-like-work inequities that CAPS-UAW has been fighting against for nearly a decade. It is now fully in effect and has a July 1, 2027 expiration date.

CAPS-UAW opposes cuts to State worker compensation proposed by the Governor in the 2025 May Budget Revision and we categorically reject your request to reopen our MOU or negotiate any reductions to State Scientist compensation at this time. We believe the request is premature, and that based on the Dills Act, as cited by the LAO, a request to reopen negotiations on all or part of the MOU, and any attendant obligation to bargain, arises once the legislature does not fully fund the relevant economic provisions.

We are communicating to the Legislature, an equal branch of California State government with equal authority in the State budget process as the Executive branch, that we believe your request is premature. The Legislature has not yet voted on whether the economic provisions of our ratified MOU will be fully funded via the annual Budget Act.

Your request to reopen our closed contract before the Legislature has taken any action on the budget, and threatening to impose changes absent an agreement, circumvents the Dills Act, erodes the foundation of collective bargaining, and undermines the California budget process.

The May Budget Revision proposes \$767 million in cuts to State employee compensation, although CAPS-UAW members have already overwhelmingly carried this burden. CAPS-UAW respectfully reminds this Administration that less than a year ago, we ratified a contract after four years without one and received no salary increases during 2022 or 2023.

Even still, we continue to battle with certain Departments that have failed to implement the salary increases guaranteed to our members retroactive to July 2024. In addition, our salaries continue to lag those of comparable professionals in local, federal, and private sector roles by upwards of 30%.

State Scientists deserve respect. Every day, we go to work to protect public health, the environment, and California's communities. Respecting State Scientists includes respecting our contract. We continue to remain concerned about the Governor's costly return-to-office mandate. The fact that this Administration cites a dire financial outlook for the State, and is pouring millions of dollars into implementing this unnecessary mandate while proposing cuts to State workers' compensation in the name of financial responsibility, is fiscally and morally wrong.

We are firm in our belief that not funding a fully ratified contract or imposing compensation reductions weakens labor relations and disregards the true spirit of collective bargaining. We strongly encourage the State to uphold the commitment it made to State Scientists via the collective bargaining process.

In closing, your May 14 request to reopen our contract and bargain over the cost of State Scientist compensation is premature and procedurally inappropriate. CAPS-UAW is committed to working with the State in good faith. If circumstances change after the annual Budget Act has been enacted, we will reconsider your request to bargain.

Best,
Jacqueline Tkac, President
CAPS, UAW Local 1115