

Dear CalHR,

I am a Senior Environmental Scientist, Specialist with the Central Valley Flood Protection Board. I am monitoring the bargaining process closely. CalHR's response will show whether this administration values scientists and our work. I have also talked to my managers, who are likewise monitoring this negotiation because they recognize that its results will have implications for our entire program for years to come.

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

Within my program, there is no distinction between tasks assigned to the Environmental Scientist series and Engineers series. Staff from both are distributed across all teams and participate in a mix of technical and policy-based work. Environmental and engineering staff lead workgroups with equal frequency, often providing direction to both scientists and engineers. It is demoralizing for scientists tasked with these responsibilities to earn far less than our engineer counterparts for the same work. Due to the pay inequity, some of my programs team leaders and project managers are the lowest paid staff of the teams they lead.

We must remain competitive to attract and retain top talent that can further our mission. Scientists working for the Federal Government and for counties across California earn significantly higher salaries than those working for the Central Valley Flood Protection Board. The maximum salary for a San Francisco County Senior Environmental Specialist is 21.4% more than the maximum for Central Valley Flood Protection Board's Senior ES position, and the salary for a Federal Scientist (GS-13) is 32.33% more. In addition, California's Air Resources Board (ARB) pays their scientists like engineers. **The pay inequity problem is apparent to those external to the program as well.** Various NGOs have spoken about the need to fairly compensate the scientists.

This is an opportunity for the Newsom Administration to demonstrate its commitment to those who work hard every day to ensure that California excels in scientific leadership and environmental protection. We are enthusiastic about the Central Valley Flood Protection Board's many successes to date and know that more equitable compensation will help our program attract and retain the diverse and innovative scientists needed to lead the nation in flood prevention.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Calles
Senior Environmental Scientist, Specialist
Central Valley Flood Protection Board