

Ms. Eraina Ortega
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Following the Unit 10 contract negotiations for the last 15 months has me wondering what your top priorities are as Director of CalHR. As the leader of the agency responsible for ensuring that the working conditions of California's employees are optimized, one of your top priorities must surely be the identification of significant issues that run the risks of compromising an agency's ability to complete its mission. If that's accurate then I trust you can understand why I find it more than a little disconcerting that you and your representatives at the bargaining table have not yet acknowledged the severe pay disparities faced by Unit 10 scientists. Pay disparities that have repeatedly been described with a tremendous level of detail by the CAPS bargaining team and many of my colleagues from around the state. So, with all the data and information presented to you on this issue, how is it possible for it to go unrecognized when it's the very type of situation that your organization is charged with addressing?

It's also disturbing that every administration for the last 15 years has chosen to act as if the scientist's pay issue doesn't exist. Why is this? Surely the State can't be gaining anything by chronically under-paying its scientists and compromising departments and programs that are on the front lines of climate change, water and food safety and a myriad of other issues that are critical to the health of all Californians. Is not expending what amounts to budget dust really the best the State can do when it comes to ensuring the safety of its citizens?

Just put yourself in the shoes of a scientist for a moment and imagine what it's like to do the same job as an engineer and then be told by your employer that you don't deserve the same pay and that it's perfectly acceptable for engineers to earn 40 to 50% more than you do. And now think about getting that message every year for 15 years. I can assure you it's a miserable feeling and one that I wouldn't wish on anyone. Would you act if this was happening to a group of your employees at CalHR? I fully expect you would immediately unless you wanted to perpetuate a tension-filled toxic workplace that doesn't benefit anyone. So why continue to subject state scientists to it?

I appreciate that you have a challenging job with competing priorities that must often be totally overwhelming, however, isn't it time to stop pretending there's no salary disparities in Unit 10 and finally put an end to this inexcusable issue? I certainly don't see any downside to ending it. Do you?

Sincerely,

Matthew McCarron

Matthew McCarron

Senior Environment Scientist

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