

Dear CalHR,

We are the Environmental Scientists and Senior Environmental Scientists (Specialists) in CDFA's Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation (OEFI). We are monitoring the bargaining process closely, because the outcome will factor into our future employment decisions. CalHR's response will show whether this administration values scientists and our work. We've also talked to our 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, we anticipate adverse impacts to our program in terms of hiring, morale, and retention. We urge the Newsom Administration to correct this pay disparity as soon as possible.

OEFI needs ESs to successfully carry out its mandate. ESs in OEFI often have more extensive training, advanced degrees, and interdisciplinary experience, which helps them navigate the nebulous space between technical assessment and regulatory implementation. Our program currently has Senior ESs and ESs with backgrounds in soil science, entomology, animal science and environmental management. Diversity in perspective is essential for productive teamwork and informed decision-making. The program will lose breadth of experience to private sector positions that can attract candidates through higher compensation.

OEFI must remain competitive to attract and retain top talent that can further its mission. Scientists working for the Federal Government and for counties across California earn significantly higher salaries than those working for CDFA. The maximum salary for a San Francisco County Senior Environmental Specialist is 21.4% more than the maximum salary for CDFA'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 (i.e., air pollution specialists) like engineers.

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 OEFI's many successes to date and know that more equitable compensation will help OEFI and other state agencies attract and retain the diverse and innovative scientists needed to lead the state and nation in climate smart agriculture.

Sincerely, the undersigned scientists of OEFI,

/s/

Ravneet Behla, PhD



Guihua Chen, PhD



Roberta Franco, PhD



Steph Jamis, MS



Alyssa Louie, DVM, MPVM



/s/

Katy Mulligan, MS



Scott Weeks

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