



# California Regional Water Quality Control Board

## Santa Ana Region



Linda S. Adams  
Secretary for  
Environmental Protection

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Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor

September 14, 2007

Linda S. Adams, Secretary  
California Environmental Protection Agency  
P. O. Box 2815  
Sacramento, CA 95812

RE: Water Board Scientists and Water Quality Protection in California

Dear Secretary Adams:

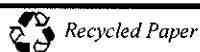
I write to you on behalf of the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board to express our grave concern about the now-longstanding and significant inequities in the salaries of our scientists, and the effects of those inequities on our work to protect water quality.

Our professional staff, and that of the State Water Board and other Regional Water Boards, includes engineers, geologists and environmental scientists who, we are told, perform work of comparable difficulty, complexity and sensitivity, often in interdisciplinary teams. Indeed, the same or similar work is frequently performed by individuals in each of these classifications working side-by-side. Yet the salaries of scientists are now 28-31% lower than their engineer/geologist colleagues. Scientist supervisors are paid significantly less than the non-supervisory engineers/geologists for whose work they are responsible. This situation is unconscionable. We understand that this is having a devastating effect on staff morale and cannot help but hurt our efforts to protect water quality.

This situation should not be allowed to continue. Failure to address the matter promptly and fairly will lead to the departure of our scientists, who can earn far more in other governmental and non-governmental organizations, and who cannot, and should not, be expected to tolerate this gross injustice. Indeed, we have already lost several scientists due to salary issues; two of our best and most experienced scientists have indicated their intent to leave unless there is equitable resolution of this matter in the near future.

Scientific expertise is integral to the work of the Water Boards and the loss of our scientists will have significant adverse consequences on the effectiveness and timeliness of our actions. California cannot afford to let this happen.

*California Environmental Protection Agency*



We understand that this matter is being pursued by the scientists union (CAPS). As we trust you are aware, on November 3, 2006, CAPS filed an appeal to DPA on behalf of scientist supervisors/managers, relying on a Government Code provision that requires like pay for like work for non-represented employees. The appeal hearing was held on April 11 and 12, 2007, and the DPA appeal panel submitted its findings to Director Gilb on or about July 17, 2007. DPA has not yet released the panel's findings, despite an explicit request from CAPS, nor has the agency provided any information concerning the status of its determination. If only as a matter of courtesy, this is unacceptable.

We are also aware that the State Board has recently initiated actions that would begin to address the salary inequity, including a classification proposal. However, requisite work on and DPA consideration of the State Board proposals is likely to take as much as a year, with no clear expectation as to outcome.

We cannot, and in fairness should not, wait to address this matter. Our scientists are hard-working, highly effective and dedicated professionals, many with 20 or more years of service to this Board. We must take actions necessary to assure that these professionals are accorded the fairness and respect that they deserve.

Your authority and leadership to resolve this matter are critical. On behalf of water quality in California, we ask that you find a way to address this salary inequity now. We trust that you will pursue innovative solutions in an aggressive manner, not constrained by historic practice. An appropriate first step would be to elicit a response from DPA to the information requests from CAPS. While you may believe that it would be inappropriate to intercede in this manner in another agency's actions, it seems to us that all state agencies should be working together in the best interest of the state, not the protection of turf or common practice. It is certainly in the interest of the people of the state and of CalEPA and its boards, departments and offices, and consistent with the Governor's stated environmental goals, to assure that the highest quality scientific expertise is retained and available to resolve water quality problems. Toward that end, interactions with other responsible state agencies necessary to address the egregious salary inequity are entirely proper.

Please keep us apprised of your actions and of progress to resolve this matter.

Sincerely,



Carole H. Beswick, Chair  
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board

cc. Regional Board Members  
Tam Doduc, Chair, SWRCB