



July 30, 2008

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Paying State Scientists In Full and On Time

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

In the absence of a state budget, you appear to be serious about lowering the wages of state scientists and all state employees to the federal minimum rate of \$6.55 per hour. This would mean that the gross salary for a state scientist would be reduced to approximately \$1,100 per month, well below a living wage.

Your draft executive order, scheduled to be issued Thursday, seems to be intended to spur the legislature to pass a state budget. Your plan to limit the wages of state employees lacks legal foundation and we will strongly oppose it.

It would also have unintended consequences that may prove costly. If enacted, some very important bills won't get paid. Mortgages, rent, health care, life insurance, spousal and child support, and many other essential payments are often deducted automatically. Unpaid bills result in costly debt and liability. There will be adverse economic impact. It could subject the state to far more in penalties than the actual amount of any payments missed.

We urge you to use other more traditional methods to reach a budget accord. State scientists are busy protecting public health, the environment and California's precious natural resources. This important work deserves fair payment in full and on time.

We have also spent months negotiating a new labor contract with representatives of your Department of Personnel Administration. We have reached agreement in principle that in order for the state to recruit and retain scientific staff essential for its environmental and public health programs, a substantial salary increase is needed. Rather than reducing salaries, the state should get serious about increasing them to be more competitive in the market place.

On behalf of all the nearly 3000 state scientists represented by CAPS, I urge you to take the steps necessary to end the budget logjam and to proceed with the important business of the state.

Sincerely,

Patty Velez
Staff Environmental Scientist
Department of Fish and Game
CAPS President

Cc: State Controller John Chiang
DPA Director David Gilb

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