

California State Scientists' Union Members Overwhelmingly Authorize Strike

More than 90% of ballots cast by California Association of Professional Scientists members were "yes" votes.

SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES, September 2, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [California Association of Professional Scientists](#) (CAPS) has



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*Jacqueline Tkac, CAPS
Bargaining Team Chair*

announced that for the first time in the union's 40-year history, its members have resoundingly voted to give the association's leadership the authority to call a strike.

Of the ballots cast, 93.51% responded "yes" when asked, "Do you authorize the CAPS Bargaining Team to call for a strike against the State of California?"

"I'm extremely proud of the members who stood together and voted. State Scientists are united and are willing to

fight for what they deserve, if necessary," said CAPS Bargaining Committee Chair Jacqueline Tkac. "This vote is a clear message to our bargaining partners in the Newsom Administration that their last, late-hour offer was sadly inadequate. We continue to bargain, of course, but time is short to reach an agreement and state scientists are tired of the state's foot-dragging and lowball offers. The Bargaining Team remains steadfastly committed to our efforts to ensure the State of California becomes a just and equitable employer for State Scientists. We are fighting for the future of science in California."

The "yes" vote means CAPS members have authorized their bargaining team to call a strike if talks fail to produce a deal members will ratify, and circumstances warrant. CAPS remains at the bargaining table, committed to securing a deal that appropriately values its members and reflects California's commitment to leading with science.

But as the Legislature nears adjournment on Sept. 14, the talks are at a critical juncture. Time is running out for an agreement to go through the required legislative process to ratify a new Memorandum of Understanding before the Senate and Assembly recess until January.

Salaries have been the primary sticking point. CAPS presented a solution on May 9. The Administration did not respond with an offer until late August.

State scientists' vital roles include protecting public health and the environment, securing the food supply, addressing climate change and ecosystem loss, and developing green energy.

Despite that important work, their wages for nearly two decades have lagged 30% or more than the salaries paid to counterparts in similar state, local, and federal positions. Their wages have also fallen behind those of their supervisors and managers by a similar percentage. CAPS has been bargaining to close the gap for all that time, including the 38 months since its last Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) expired in mid-2020. State law and the terms of the previous contract keep the expired agreement's terms in place until a new agreement is reached or impasse is declared.

For more information about CAPS and its struggle for pay equity, go to capscontract2023.org.

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ABOUT CAPS

CAPS represents roughly 5,600 state-employed scientists (including 4,300 rank and file and 1,300 supervisors and managers) working in over 30 state departments in 81 scientific classifications. CAPS members protect Californians from life-threatening diseases; safeguard our wildlife and abundant natural resources; and protect our food supply, air and water from toxic waste and pollution. Follow on X.com and Instagram: @capsscientists.

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