

California State Scientists' Union Calls First-Ever State Employee Strike for Nov. 15-17

The planned walkout follows more than three years of bargaining with Gov. Newsom for a new contract

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, November 14, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The



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CAPS President Jacqueline Tkac

[California Association of Professional Scientists](#) (CAPS) has announced that its members will strike starting tomorrow, an action they have dubbed "Defiance for Science," to send a strong message to Gov. Gavin Newsom that the union will not accept a contract that fails to appropriately value its members and their vital public service.

"We're tired, but we're also energized," said CAPS President Jacqueline Tkac. "We're tired of this administration's delay tactics and woefully inadequate offers at the bargaining table. We're tired of the governor talking up California's scientific approach to environmental policies while he fails to adequately compensate the scientists who inform and enforce those policies. But we're energized like never before to exercise collective power to get a contract that values our members and their crucial work. We are energized to fight for the future of science in California."

In the more than four decades that California state employees have collectively bargained their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment, none has ever gone on strike.

Despite their important work, state scientists' pay for nearly 20 years has lagged [by 30% or more](#) 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 39 months since its last Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) expired in mid-2020.

In August, CAPS members overwhelmingly authorized their bargaining team to call a strike after talks failed to produce an agreement that members would ratify. The union's last contract expired July 1, 2020. CAPS continued to meet with the administration but eventually sought and won a declaration of impasse by the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) because negotiations were deadlocked.

The two sides met with the mediator on Nov. 8. After gauging the administration's position, CAPS informed the state that union members would strike on Nov. 15 to send a clear signal to Newsom that his representatives must come to the next mediation session on Nov. 28 ready to move toward contract terms that value state scientists. The administration filed an Unfair Practice Claim (UPC) against CAPS in an attempt to stop the union from striking. As of today, PERB has not made a decision on the administration's claim, so CAPS will strike as planned.

Defiance for Science will add to the list of struck worksites for picketing from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily from Wednesday through Friday. Actions begin on Wednesday at the CalEPA Building at 1001 I St. in Sacramento and continue through Friday, when all State Scientists in all parts of the state will walk off the job.

Contact CAPS to arrange interviews with CAPS Union President Jacqueline Tkac and background discussions regarding PERB, the impasse ruling and UPC filings.

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: @capsscscientists.

Jon Ortiz

California Association of Professional Scientists

+1 916-761-8267

jortiz@capsscscientists.org

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