

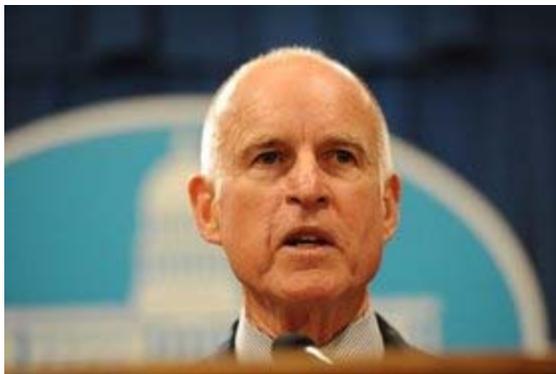


Chronicling civil-service life for California state workers



July 3, 2013

Jerry Brown grants raises for some water department workers



Gov. **Jerry Brown** has agreed to increase pay by up to 37 percent for water department workers in positions the state has had difficulty staffing.

Brown and representatives from International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) finalized an addendum to the union's contract Wednesday to raise the pay by 17.9 percent to 37.4 percent for 741 employees for 34 job classifications in the Department of Water Resources. The raises are effective immediately and are estimated to cost the state \$18.3 million.

State and union officials have said the raises are needed to prevent the drain of State Water Project employees to other higher-paying jobs. The vacancy rate in jobs responsible for running and operating the vast project has run between 10 percent and 15 percent for the last two years.

The agreement comes after California Water Commission Chairman **Joseph Byrne** warned of a staffing "crisis" in the department. In a April 23 letter to Resources Secretary John Laird, he noted some employees were being paid "65 percent below the industry's median."

In some cases, the state has spent \$300,000 to \$400,000 to train employees, only to see them lured away from state service by higher salaries elsewhere, department officials have said.

In effort to retain existing staff in the short term, the agreement prevents workers from immediately using the extra pay to bump up their retirement. The deal says workers cannot apply any of the raise toward their pension calculation if they retire before July 1, 2014 and only half of it if they retire before July 1, 2015. After that, their full salary could be used for pension calculations.

The agreement will affect 19 rank-and-file classes, three manager classes and 12 supervisor classes.

"As one of the largest utilities in the world, it is vitally important that the Department of Water Resources retain highly skilled professionals to ensure timely, efficient deliveries of water to 25 million Californians

and thousands of farms and ranches," Richard Stapler, deputy secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, said in a prepared statement. "California's economy relies on a secure, reliable supply of water, and a loss of these professionals to other utilities could also cost the state millions of dollars in missed water deliveries."

PHOTO: Gov. Jerry Brown in 2012. The Sacramento Bee/Hector Amezcua

Categories: Pay and benefits, Pensions, State workers, Unions

Tags: contracts, IUOE, Jerry Brown



Posted by **Amy Gebert**

7:29 PM | 34 Comments

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