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A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

June 6, 2025

2. Department

Food and Agriculture

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Border Protection Stations (BPS) Branch

4. CEA Position Title

Branch Chief, Border Protection Stations

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose. (2-3 sentences)

The Branch Chief, Border Protection Stations (BPS) oversees the development and enforcement of policies related to pest exclusion and agricultural protection at 16 border protection stations statewide. This position is responsible for developing strategic policy initiatives to prevent the introduction of invasive species, coordinating inter-agency efforts, and ensuring compliance with state and federal plant quarantine laws. The position directly impacts the mission of CDFA by safeguarding California's agricultural industry and natural resources.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

Division Director, Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services (CEA Level B)

7. Relationship with Department Director (Select one)

- Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(Explain):

8. Organizational Level (Select one)

- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

The CEA serves as the Branch Chief for the Border Protection Stations (BPS) and is responsible for statewide policy development, strategic oversight, and operational leadership of California's 16 BPS facilities. This position is critical to protecting California's agricultural industry from invasive species and ensuring compliance with state and federal quarantine laws.

The CEA develops, interprets, and implements statewide pest exclusion policies and procedures, including contributing to the drafting and revision of laws and regulations aimed at preventing the introduction of invasive pests and plant diseases. This includes maintaining compliance with Division 4 of the Food and Agricultural Code and applicable federal regulations such as the United States Plant Protection Act.

The incumbent provides high-level direction and oversight of enforcement operations related to California's agricultural quarantine laws across all border station locations. They coordinate field activities and enforcement operations with multiple local, state, and federal entities, including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), California Highway Patrol (CHP), California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), California Air Resources Board (CARB), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and county agricultural commissioners. Coordination includes managing safety protocols, joint enforcement actions, and logistical operations at ports of entry beyond the 16 fixed BPS sites.

The CEA serves as a principal representative of the program in legislative hearings, media inquiries, and inter-agency work groups. The role includes preparing and delivering expert testimony, responding to legislative and stakeholder inquiries, conducting bill analyses, and advising executive leadership on policy impacts and implementation strategies.

The position manages an annual program budget exceeding \$27.6 million. The CEA ensures proper allocation of funds, identifies operational efficiencies, and seeks new funding streams to support emerging technologies, infrastructure improvements, and enhanced enforcement capacity.

The CEA is responsible for long-term infrastructure planning for California's Border Protection Stations and plays a lead role in developing and submitting Capital Outlay Budget Change Proposals (COBCPs) to secure funding for new construction, modernization, and major facility repair projects. This includes identifying operational needs, defining project scopes, estimating costs, and ensuring alignment with statewide strategic goals. The incumbent works in direct partnership with the Department of General Services (DGS) and contracted vendors to oversee project planning, design, bidding, and execution phases. The CEA ensures that facilities meet programmatic requirements for safety, functionality, and regulatory compliance, and provides high-level guidance on prioritization of capital projects based on operational risk, emerging threats, and station performance metrics. Through this process, the CEA ensures the physical infrastructure of the Border Protection Stations continues to support statewide pest exclusion efforts and multi-agency enforcement activities.

The incumbent also oversees the development and execution of cooperative agreements with other state agencies including the CDFW, California Department of Justice (DOJ), CARB, Division of Boating and Waterways, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA), and other divisions within CDFA. These agreements support joint enforcement activities, data collection efforts, and program reporting requirements.

Additionally, the CEA leads strategic planning efforts for facility modernization, technology integration, and cross-jurisdictional collaboration. The position attends regular meetings with key stakeholders and government partners, ensuring ongoing coordination and communication between CDFA and federal, state, and local agencies across the United States.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: The Border Protection Stations Branch serves as California's first and most critical line of defense against the introduction of invasive pests and plant diseases. It plays an essential role in enforcing state and federal quarantine laws and directly supports the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) core mission to protect and promote the state's agricultural industry, natural resources, and public health.

Without this program, California would face a significantly increased risk of harmful species entering and establishing within the state, resulting in devastating ecological and economic consequences. California's agricultural industry, valued at over \$50 billion annually, depends on robust border enforcement to safeguard crop health, maintain domestic production, preserve access to international export markets, and ensure compliance with state, federal, and international trade regulations. The ripple effect of a compromised agricultural sector would jeopardize millions of jobs across related industries such as shipping, food processing, logistics, retail, and manufacturing—affecting the economic stability of hundreds of thousands of California households.

The Border Protection Stations prevent the introduction of invasive organisms that could destroy crops, degrade ecosystems, and necessitate costly eradication or long-term pest management programs. The program reduces reliance on pesticides and other chemical interventions by stopping threats before they can establish, which supports both environmental sustainability and public health goals. Additionally, failure to intercept pests at the border would increase pressure on California's eradication and containment programs, significantly straining state resources.

Beyond rural agriculture, the program also safeguards urban agriculture and green infrastructure, including community gardens, home orchards, and the urban tree canopy. These assets contribute to food security, local economic value, and environmental resilience in California's cities. A failure in border pest exclusion could result in widespread damage to these systems, reducing property values and disproportionately affecting under-served communities that rely on local food sources.

The program is also essential to preserving California's diverse natural environment. If invasive pests or diseases are introduced and allowed to establish, the consequences to native ecosystems—including sensitive, threatened, and endangered species—could be irreversible. Entire habitats and native species populations could be permanently altered or lost, compromising the state's biodiversity and long-term environmental health.

The mission of the Border Protection Stations requires constant adaptation to evolving pest threats, international trade dynamics, and agricultural trends. It is foundational to California's pest exclusion strategy and central to the California Department of Food and Agriculture's success in protecting the state's economy, environment, and public trust.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

The increasing complexity of pest exclusion efforts, evolving trade regulations, and the rising volume of agricultural imports into California have necessitated a higher level of policy leadership and strategic oversight within the Border Protection Stations Branch. Threats posed by invasive pests have escalated due to climate change, the expansion of e-commerce, expanded trade routes, and heightened global movement of goods. These conditions have required state and federal regulatory agencies to adopt a more proactive and adaptive approach to pest prevention and exclusion policies.

Historically, the position overseeing the Border Protection Stations focused primarily on operational management, including daily oversight of inspections and enforcement activities. However, the current landscape demands a broader, statewide focus on policy development, legislative engagement, and inter-agency coordination. This requires an executive-level position with the authority to shape regulatory frameworks, represent the department in high-level discussions, and lead long-term strategic planning efforts.

Recent pest introductions—such as invasive fruit flies and wood-boring beetles—highlight the urgency for a more coordinated statewide response and the implementation of new state exterior quarantines. As new pests become established in other states, California must act quickly to prevent their entry. Additionally, increased scrutiny and expectations from federal partners, including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), require enhanced policy alignment and coordination.

The rise in high-risk shipments and the need for improved, data-driven risk assessments further support the need for leadership capable of driving policy innovation, ensuring regulatory compliance, and implementing new detection techniques and technologies. This also includes securing necessary funding to support expanded program operations.

The request to establish this CEA, Level A reflects the expanded scope of responsibility within the Border Protection Stations Branch. The increased emphasis on regulatory development, fiscal oversight, and statewide coordination demonstrates the need for an executive-level role to lead this work effectively and protect California's agriculture, environment, and economy from invasive pests and diseases.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

Programmatic Policy Development and Implementation

The CEA will be the principal policy maker responsible for developing and coordinating statewide policies and procedures governing inspection and enforcement activities conducted by Border Protection Stations (BPS) staff. This includes interpreting and applying Division 4 of the Food and Agricultural Code (FAC), relevant sections of the United States Plant Protection Act, and corresponding federal regulations and quarantine orders. These policies determine how California prevents the entry of invasive pests and diseases at its borders, directly affecting the integrity of the state's pest exclusion system. The statewide impact includes the protection of California's \$50 billion agricultural industry, the reduction of pesticide use through early interception of pests, and the preservation of native ecosystems and biodiversity.

Personnel and Administrative Policies

The CEA will establish internal policies and procedures specific to the Border Protection Stations Branch, due to its operational complexity and unique structure. These policies will include on-boarding procedures, staff expectations memos, health and safety protocols, injury and illness prevention plans, and ongoing professional development programs. The position will also set policies related to state owned residential housing for station staff and site specific facilities maintenance and repair procedures. These internal governance frameworks ensure consistent operations, staff safety, and legal compliance across all 16 stations, which are spread geographically across California and operate under high risk conditions due to their enforcement role.

Budgetary and Facilities Policies

The CEA will be the lead policy official for budget planning and facilities related matters, including the development of Capital Outlay Budget Change Proposals (COBCPs), inter-agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs), and cooperative agreements. The position will direct long range facilities planning, including new station construction, infrastructure modernization, and facility repair and maintenance. These policies impact statewide program effectiveness by ensuring the infrastructure and fiscal resources supporting California's pest exclusion efforts remain efficient, modernized, and aligned with projected trade and pest risk patterns.

Inter-agency Enforcement and Operational Coordination Policies

The CEA will develop policies governing coordination between CDFA and partner agencies such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), California Highway Patrol (CHP), local law enforcement, Caltrans, and county agricultural commissioners. These policies will address operational field coordination, safety protocols, and enforcement procedures at California's points of entry. The statewide impact includes streamlined enforcement activities, improved response to interdiction needs beyond the 16 main highway stations, and enhanced regulatory alignment between state and federal quarantine efforts.

Emergency Response and Regulatory Adaptation Policies

The CEA will set policies guiding the program's response to new pest detections and changing pest risk profiles from other states or countries. This includes protocols for emergency quarantine implementation, communication with stakeholders, and adaptive inspection procedures. These policies allow California to rapidly respond to invasive pest threats before they are introduced, minimizing the risk of establishment and longterm environmental and economic damage. The statewide impact includes preserving agricultural market access, reducing costly eradication efforts, and ensuring the agility of the pest exclusion framework in a shifting global trade environment.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The Branch Chief of the Border Protection Stations holds full statewide authority for setting quarantine enforcement policy, directing regulatory compliance strategies, and managing the operational integrity of all 16 Border Protection Stations throughout California. This position is responsible for developing and implementing comprehensive policy frameworks that ensure alignment with Division 4 of the Food and Agricultural Code, federal quarantine laws such as the United States Plant Protection Act, and applicable regulatory mandates. The role provides strategic oversight of California's front-line defense against invasive pests and plant diseases.

The scope of authority includes establishing statewide enforcement priorities, implementing risk-based inspection models, and standardizing compliance protocols across all stations. The CEA determines inspection procedures, operational directives, and enforcement escalation protocols in coordination with federal and state partners, including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), California Highway Patrol (CHP), and other regulatory agencies. The position ensures consistent execution of pest exclusion policy statewide, directly influencing how goods are inspected and how agricultural risk is managed at California's points of entry.

This position makes high-level, autonomous policy decisions that directly affect California's \$50+ billion agricultural economy. These decisions influence international trade compliance, support the stability of domestic agricultural markets, and contribute to the protection of natural resources and biodiversity. The Branch Chief serves as a primary advisor to the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) on pest exclusion policy matters, represents the department in legislative hearings, and participates in inter-agency and interstate policy coordination. The position also leads funding strategies through the development of Budget Change Proposals (BCPs) and Capital Outlay Budget Change Proposals (COBCPs), shaping long-term resource allocations for the program.

The nature of decision-making is highly strategic, involving analysis of complex and evolving regulatory issues, forecasting of invasive pest threats, and the adaptation of enforcement strategies in response to climate trends, global trade developments, and statutory requirements. The CEA exercises broad discretionary authority over pest exclusion efforts, balancing scientific risk data with operational feasibility, legal mandates, and fiscal constraints. The position's decisions carry statewide impact and are essential to maintaining California's quarantine integrity, protecting agricultural and environmental assets, and upholding compliance with both national and international trade standards.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

Yes. The CEA will be responsible for both developing and implementing new policy, as well as interpreting and updating existing policy. In order to remain effective and aligned with emerging inspection techniques, advancing technologies, new trade agreements, evolving pest pathways, and increasing volumes of commodities entering the state, the position must continuously evaluate, revise, and establish policies that reflect current risk and enforcement priorities.

As older policies become obsolete or incompatible with current regulatory or operational frameworks, the CEA will be required to modify or replace them to ensure continued effectiveness. The ongoing emergence of invasive species across the United States necessitates continual changes in pest exclusion strategies and the policies that support them. This requires an adaptive, forward-looking approach to policy development, grounded in real-time threat analysis, scientific data, and legislative alignment.