

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

6/5/2025

2. Department

Department of Conservation

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

Land Resource Protection

4. CEA Position Title

Assistant Division Director, CEA A

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

This position is responsible for making executive-level decisions related to policy and administration of the Division's multiple programs. Many of these programs are critical to the implementation of natural resources policies across the state, including forest and wildfire resilience, water management, climate adaptation and resilience, working lands conservation and stewardship, and community resilience. This position receives delegated authority from the Division Director to carry out the mandates of the programs and often exercises discretion in carrying out the laws and responsibilities of the Division. This position also ensures that the Division Director and the Director of the Department of Conservation have a wide-range of administrative and policy input in making decisions that impact natural resources across the state.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

CEA 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*): The CEA works directly with the Executive Management Team on key policy issues within the state.

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 proposed Assistant Division Director would be the first level supervisor, in lieu of the Division Director, for all Programs within Division of Land Resource Protection (DLRP) and would be responsible for making executive-level decisions related to policy and ensuring all DLRP programs operate in accordance with all State laws, regulations and requirements. In addition, the Assistant Division Director would be responsible for presenting program-related and budgetary recommendations to the Division Director on behalf of the Programs. The Assistant Division Director would be the point of contact for specific Administrative and Executive offices within DOC and certain control agencies and stakeholders when required in the Division Director's absence. The Assistant Division Director would be responsible for maintaining and overseeing the DLRP budget, facilities, vehicles, equipment, and assisting Programs in all personnel decisions. Some specific examples of the Program responsibilities the Assistant Division Director will be responsible for are as follows:

1. Collaborating with the Division Director and program managers in the formulation and dissemination of Statewide Programs in key policy areas, including developing, evaluating, and implementing policies and procedures to meet the goals of the Department, Resources Agency, and Governor's Office. Programs include, among others:
 - The Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, which provides critical capacity building and support services to regional organizations working to implement the state's forest and wildfire resilience efforts
 - The Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program, which provides essential capacity building and support services to regional organizations tasked with implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and ensures that land repurposing necessary under SGMA occurs in a way that reduces harm and provides benefits to local communities, the economy, and the environment
 - The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program, which protects the state's important agricultural lands from conversion to vehicle-dependent forms of development and contributes to the state's climate and land conservation goals
 - The Williamson Act, which provides tax incentives to lands maintained in agriculture over the life of the contract
 - The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, which provides agricultural land conversion data to support local land use decision making.
2. Supporting the Division Director in the implementation of strategic planning processes across Division programs.
3. Overseeing Department and Division grant-making, financial, and administrative processes, including budgets, contracts, purchasing, fleet, and facilities.
4. Representing the Division in the Division Director's absence.
5. Leading and driving DLRP's use of performance management tools for program implementation (i.e., work planning) and for employee relations as it relates to training, coaching, mentoring, and progressive discipline.
6. Establishing performance metrics, tracking key program outcomes, evaluating the performance and impacts of programs, and supporting program adaptation to meet Division goals.
7. Facilitating inter-team communication and collaboration at multiple scales and applying adaptive management principles to support team-level implementation of division and department-level guidance.

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 Department of Conservation's mission is to balance today's needs with tomorrow's challenges and foster intelligent, sustainable, and efficient use of California's energy, land, and mineral resources. Oil and gas regulation ensures the state's mineral resources are sustainably managed, while mine reclamation ensures that surface mines can and are reclaimed to a usable and safe condition for the benefit of people and wildlife after mined resources are extracted. Geological hazard mapping supports protection of the public from natural hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and debris flows. The Division of Land Resource Protection focuses on conservation of another land resource, the state's important agricultural soils.

Soil is synonymous with land. Soils are a finite resource, and California boasts some of the most fertile agricultural soils in the nation. These soils support the growth of a third of the country's vegetables and over three-quarters of the country's fruits and nuts. However, these soils are threatened by multiple other priorities, including housing, energy production, and warehouse development. The Division of Land Resource Protection maintains a continuous time series of data tracking conversions of the state's agricultural soils to urban uses, which supports state and local land use planning and decision making that balances the state's housing, renewable energy, and agricultural production priorities. The Division also administers programs designed to protect these soils from conversion by funding local agricultural land use planning and direct conservation. These efforts are essential not only to ensuring that the state has the land resources necessary to maintain food security for millions of Californians into the future, but to meeting the state's climate adaptation and resilience targets.

The Division of Land Resource Protection also provides critical capacity building and support services to local and regional organizations to address the state's critical water and forest resilience needs in a way that benefits all Californians today and into the future.

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.

Currently, the work that is being proposed for the Assistant Division Director is being performed by a Staff Services Manager III. Over the last seven years, the number and size of the Division's programs and teams have grown, necessitating broader policy expertise at the Division level, along with additional coordination across policy areas and programs. In 2018, the Assistant Division Director oversaw three land conservation programs, the Transformative Climate Communities Program, the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the Williamson Act program, the Watershed Coordinators Program, and Resource Conservation technical assistance work. Today, in addition to these programs, the Division also administers the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, which supports the state's forest and wildfire resilience efforts, and the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program, which is designed to address strategic repurposing of agricultural land to support the state's groundwater sustainability goals. Both programs have received significant infusions of funding in the last year as a result of the climate bond, which the Division will be responsible for administering over the next decade. The Division has also been tasked with developing a new equitable agricultural land access program with climate bond funding, which will require creation of a new unit within the Division. This growth has added both policy and administrative responsibilities to the Division Director and Assistant Division Director's plates, increasing the complexity of the work both positions must perform. For example, instead of working exclusively in the agricultural policy space, the Division Director and Assistant Director now work across the climate, agriculture, water, fire, community resilience, and general natural resources spaces. Similarly, within the Division, additional personnel require additional oversight and an increased level of coordination across programs.

The Division Director represents the Division at both the state and national level, informing agricultural land conservation policies, coordinating with other departments in the development and implementation of state water, forest, and natural resources policies, and ensuring the Division's work aligns with the state's natural resources and working lands goals. The Assistant Division Director provides support to the Division Director, and as Division program work continues to grow, it has become increasingly essential for the Assistant Division Director to take on additional policy expertise and play a lead role within the Division when the Assistant Division Director is unavailable.

This proposal will allow the Division of Land Resource Protection to hire an individual that has policy expertise at the executive level to support the Division's increased policy responsibilities along with the skill set to coordinate the day-to-day operations of an organization that is growing to 50+ staff in a manner that ensures the integrity, effectiveness, and consistency of operations Division-wide.

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.

1. Wildfire response and forest resilience: A warming climate increases California's risk of wildfire, threatening the lives of countless Californians and impacting watershed systems and forests across the state. Supporting regional leadership to develop, prioritize, and implement strategies and projects that create fire-adapted communities and landscapes is critical to improving ecosystem health, community wildfire preparedness, and fire resilience across the state. Developing deeper partnerships with stakeholders (e.g., CALFIRE and local communities) will allow DLRP to develop better strategies to help the state manage these systems and mitigate disasters related to wildfires and a warming climate. This position will be responsible for developing regional partnership engagement strategies and informing region-appropriate wildfire and forest resilience policies and practices to ensure community readiness and reduce wildfire intensity across the state.
2. Groundwater sustainability and community resilience: Declines in the state's aquifer levels threaten the diversity and sustainability of California's agricultural economy, as well as drinking water for many California communities across the Central Valley and the state. Implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management is vital to maintaining the state's critical water supplies; however, this implementation is predicted to result in the loss of 500,000 to a million acres of irrigated agricultural land by 2040 and is likely to have significant negative impacts on communities, the economy, and the environment if taken out of production in a haphazard way. Deeping partnerships with stakeholders (e.g., DWR, SWRCB, CDFW, CDFA, local groundwater sustainability agencies, and others) is critical to ensuring that the state's attain groundwater sustainability in a way that improves community and environmental health and well-being. This position will coordinate with partners to develop land repurposing policies that meet state climate, biodiversity, groundwater sustainability, and community resilience goals and ensure that land repurposing associated with sustainable groundwater management occurs in a coordinated way.
3. Working lands protection: Soils are a finite resource, and California boasts some of the most fertile agricultural soils in the nation. These soils serve as an important carbon sink and support the growth of a third of the country's vegetables and over three-quarters of the country's fruits and nuts. Conserving these soils and the agricultural practices that occur thereon is critical to meeting the state's 30x30 and climate goals, as well as supporting the state's infill and compact development efforts. The state has set a goal to conserve 30% of California's lands and waters by 2030, 12,000 acres of annual and perennial cropland per year through 2030, and 33,000 acres of rangeland per year through 2030. This position will help to oversee DLRP's agricultural land conservation programs and will develop and update policies to meet the state's agricultural land conservation goals in response to existing and emerging policy priorities, including renewable energy development.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

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

The CEA position's scope is very broad and implements Division statutes and regulations, makes discretionary decisions on behalf of the Division Director, responds to requests from federal, state and local authorities, works with various levels of governments to ensure protection of the State's natural and working lands, and helps prepare the State for various types of natural disasters to mitigate their effects. The CEA's authority covers the entire State.

The CEA is a high-level decision maker and works directly with the Division Director, Chief Deputy Director of the Department, the Assistant Chief Counsel of Legal, the Assistant Director of Administration, and Resources Agency staff, to inform, implement, and enforce the statutes and regulations of the Division throughout the State. The CEA has decision making authority for all of the Programs within the Division in the Division Director's absence. The CEA will oversee a team composed of highly-qualified managers and senior staff who will implement policy under the direction of the CEA. The CEA will direct the activities, on behalf of or in lieu of the Division Director, of one Staff Services Manager II, four Senior Environmental Planners, twenty-two grant managers (environmental planners, associate environmental planners, and an SSM I (specialist)), seven mapping personnel and GIS experts (environmental scientists and research data analysts), three subject matter experts (associate environmental planners and senior environmental scientist), and nine clerical and administrative support staff (AGPAs).

The CEA will regularly communicate with the highest level officials in the division and department, including the Division Director, the Chief Deputy Director of the Department of Conservation, as well as top officials of other federal, state, and local governments, and elected officials throughout the State.

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

Yes. The Assistant Division Director will be integral to the development and implementation of new policy, including around equitable agricultural land access; will inform updates to existing policies in the wildfire, groundwater, and agricultural conservation spaces in response to new information, state goals, and community needs; and will interpret and implement existing policy in all of the policy spaces under the Division's purview. The Assistant Division Director will also have charge of overseeing adherence to, and accomplishment of, Division goals and objectives.