# CEA ACTION PROPOSAL



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: 2026-07-03

2. Department: Parks and Recreation

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

Program Operations, Park Ops

4. CEA Position Title

Deputy Director, Program Operations

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

The Department proposes to redesignate the existing Deputy Director, Park Operations as the Deputy Director, Program Operations. As part of the Park Operations reorganization, executive responsibility for statewide field operations will transition to a newly established Deputy Director, Field Operations, while law enforcement and emergency services will be centralized under a Deputy Director, Law Enforcement & Emergency Services. The Deputy Director, Program Operations will provide dedicated executive leadership for statewide program policy, strategic initiatives, and headquarters program divisions.

6. Reports to: (*Class Title/Level*)

Exempt- Chief Deputy Director

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 Deputy Director, Program Operations provides executive leadership and statewide policy direction for the Department's headquarters program divisions responsible for natural resource stewardship, cultural resources, interpretation and education, partnerships, and acquisition and development.

The position establishes statewide program priorities, develops enterprise policy, allocates program resources, and provides executive oversight of statewide initiatives affecting all 280 park units. The Deputy Director directs the Acquisition & Development Division, including the Northern and Southern Service Centers, capital planning, design and construction, and real property functions, ensuring statewide infrastructure investments support departmental priorities.

The position collaborates closely with the Deputy Directors for Field Operations and Law Enforcement & Emergency Services to ensure consistent statewide implementation of program policies and strategic objectives.

## 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 Deputy Director, Program Operations is necessary to provide dedicated executive oversight of the Department's statewide program policy functions, which have expanded significantly since the 2017 reorganization. The Department's growing portfolio of statewide initiatives—including climate resilience, cultural resource stewardship, expanded tribal partnerships, visitor access initiatives, and capital infrastructure planning—requires focused executive leadership independent of day-to-day field operations.

## 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.

Since the 2017 reorganization, the Park Operations Division has expanded substantially in both scope and complexity. In addition to managing field operations across 280 park units, the Division assumed responsibility for statewide policy divisions and law enforcement and emergency services functions, all reporting through a single Deputy Director. This structure has created an executive span of control that exceeds reasonable governance complexity and capacity.

Over the past several years, the Department has experienced significant growth in statewide initiatives, including the Cannabis and Watershed Protection Program, Wildfire and Forest Resilience initiatives, Reexamining Our Past, K–12 Access Expansion, Arts in California Parks, Outdoors for All, expanded Tribal partnerships, and deployment of a new statewide reservation system. These programs require centralized policy development, funding prioritization, performance standards, and consistent statewide implementation.

At the same time, climate-related emergencies—including record-setting wildfires, catastrophic flooding, erosion, and sea level rise impacts—have increased policy sensitivity, interagency coordination requirements, and legislative scrutiny.

The cumulative effect of new programs, increased responsibility, and growing workload has materially expanded the depth and breadth of statewide policy governance. Separating Program Operations into a dedicated Deputy Director position ensures focused executive leadership over policy development and program implementation while correcting span-of-control concerns created by the prior structure.

This restructuring improves executive focus, strengthens accountability, and better aligns headquarters policy development with statewide implementation.

## 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.

The Deputy Director, Program Operations will serve as the principal policy maker in the following statewide program areas:

1. Statewide Program Policy and Strategic Direction
Establishes statewide policies, strategic priorities, and program objectives governing the Department's natural resources, cultural resources, interpretation and education, partnerships, and other headquarters program functions to ensure consistent implementation across California's 280 park units.

2. Resource Stewardship and Visitor Experience
Develops policies that balance natural and cultural resource protection with public access, visitor services, education, recreation, and stewardship responsibilities while advancing statewide initiatives and legislative priorities.

3. Capital Planning and Infrastructure Investment
Provides executive oversight of the Acquisition & Development Division, establishing priorities for capital outlay planning, design and construction, real property acquisition, and long-term infrastructure investment to support the Department's operational and strategic objectives.

4. Enterprise Program Governance and Interagency Coordination
Establishes statewide policy frameworks governing program implementation, funding priorities, and coordination with federal, state, Tribal, and local agencies, nonprofit partners, and other stakeholders to achieve Department-wide objectives.

5. Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance
Provides executive leadership for enterprise initiatives, organizational planning, policy integration, performance management, and continuous improvement efforts to ensure statewide programs remain aligned with the Department's mission, strategic plan, and emerging priorities.

## C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

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

The Deputy Director exercises broad executive authority over statewide program policy affecting every park unit. The position establishes program priorities, directs policy development, allocates resources, oversees capital planning through the Acquisition & Development Division, and advises executive leadership on statewide strategic initiatives.

The Deputy Director directs subordinate Division Chiefs and resolves cross-program conflicts, ensuring alignment with legislative mandates, executive priorities, and departmental strategic objectives. The position has authority to interpret new laws and statewide initiatives, establish measurable performance standards, and recommend policy adjustments to executive leadership.

Decisions made by this position have statewide impact, influence long-term program direction, and affect resource allocation, compliance posture, public access strategy, and intergovernmental coordination.

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

The Deputy Director develops new statewide policies governing the Department's major program areas and interprets existing statutory, regulatory, and executive direction to ensure consistent implementation across all park units. The position also establishes strategic priorities for statewide initiatives and infrastructure investments through executive oversight of the Acquisition & Development Division.