



WINTER 2022 NEWSLETTER

PECG Updates

PECG Telework Stipend pg. 2

Sacramento Kings pg. 2

What's Been Happening

Philanthropy Committee pg. 3

Political Liaison Committee pg. 3-4

PE and PG Stamps pg. 4

At-Large and In-Charge! pg. 4-5

Our River City Section

Celebrating Milestones pg. 5

New Section Officers pg. 6-7



Kevin Pfeiffer
Director

Brandon Roosenboom
VP Rank and File

Tim Chow
President

Emily Cushman
VP at Large

Khristina Lebya
President Elect
(Vacant)
Treasurer

John Murphy
VP Supervisory
Bryan Moore
Secretary

PECG Updates

PECG Telework Stipend

In October 2021, the PECG Bargaining Team reached agreement with the State on a Side Letter that will provide Unit 9 “remote-centered” employees (working from home 50% or more of the time) with a \$50 a month telework stipend. “Office-centered” Unit 9 employees, working more than 50% of the time in the office, will be eligible to receive \$25 a month. The stipends will be paid retroactively to October 1, 2021. Employees who are not teleworking will not qualify for a telework stipend.



The money to pay the stipends must be appropriated in legislation approved by the Legislature and signed by the governor. Unfortunately, that did not happen in 2021 because the Legislature adjourned for the year in September, prior to PECG, and other bargaining units, coming to agreement on the telework stipend side letters.

PECG will continue to urge the State to introduce a bill funding the telework stipends and then make certain the bill is approved and signed as quickly as possible. Thank you for your patience.

River City with the Sacramento Kings

The River City Section is offering you and a guest subsidized tickets to the Denver Nuggets vs. Sacramento Kings game on **Wednesday, March 9, 2022!** The Section will subsidize event tickets from \$65 down to **\$25 for you and a guest!** Additional tickets can be purchased at the regular price of \$65. We will also provide a **\$30 food voucher with each subsidized ticket.** Children under the age of two are free to attend.

Tickets can be purchased [HERE](#), and are expected to sell out quickly. The last day to purchase tickets is **February 7th at noon.**

We are monitoring the recent Omicron variant and other changes in the ongoing pandemic and will adjust or cancel this event accordingly. Refunds will be provided. Also, please note that there is a Covid-19 entrance policy for the Golden One Center, which can be reviewed at purchase.



PECG River City

WITH THE SACRAMENTO KINGS

What's Been Happening

Philanthropy Committee

Sponsorship of Girls Tinker Academy, Sonoma County

In 2021, the Philanthropy Committee partnered with Sonoma County's Community WISE (Women Investing in STEM Equity) organization to partially sponsor the 2021 Girls Tinker Academy. The Girls Tinker Academy aims to engage and inspire middle-school girls to pursue STEM careers through hands-on activities designed to explore scientific principles and develop technical, mathematical, and artistic abilities. The Girls Tinker Academy is a two-week program comprised of various sessions led by STEM professors and undergraduate students at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California.



The Girls Tinker Academy is free for students due to support from PEGC and other organizations. Philanthropy Committee members are currently working with Community WISE staff to explore opportunities to continue and expand our support for the Girls Tinker Academy program in 2022. For more information on the Girls Tinker Academy, please visit their [webpage](#) or watch this [video](#).

Political Liaison Committee

Your Section Political Liaison Committee has been active at local political events and interacting with politicians that support unionized labor.

Since the last newsletter, committee members have attended numerous Truman Club events and a Sacramento Democrats "Rising" event with California State Controller Betty Yee (pictured right).

PEGC, and your local Political Committee, are strictly non-partisan. Our goal is to assist labor-friendly candidates through non-financial means. These efforts include phone and text banking, future precinct walking, and networking. We continue to look for ways to network with our representatives and show them why PEGC members matter.



From left to right: Mike Whiteside, Betty Yee, Kevin Pfeiffer, Sam Akkad

If you are interested in ongoing activities, please contact the committee chair, Mohamed Salem, at Mohamed.Salem@waterboards.ca.gov. Note that we do not discuss political events or coordinate activities through the state email server, so you will be asked to provide a personal email address where we can contact you outside of state digital property.

Still reading? Great! Please submit answers to a two question survey to let us know [HERE!](#)

PE and PG Stamps

The path towards professional licensing requires several years of qualifying experience and critical steps involving multiple agencies. The process is regularly updated, which compounds the level of complexity. The Learning Resources Committee aims to help by providing simplified charts, connecting members, and providing incentives for obtaining your License. Visit our [Learning Resources Committee](#) page to find resources on how to apply, network with fellow test-takers via our Google Sheet, and take advantage of our Stamp Reimbursement Program.



The River City Section is now covering the cost of your professional stamp. You can find more information on our website or by contacting Lang Khang at Lang.Khang@waterboards.ca.gov

At-Large and In-Charge!

Submitted by Kevin Pfeiffer, 7-year PECG member and avid hand-wringer

“At-Large and In-Charge is a place for River City Members to engage and share how at-large service matters to them. (River City is an “At-Large” section. This means our Section is composed of non-Caltrans employees and therefore have a non-typical work experience compared to the majority of the union. CalTrans members comprise a majority of our union)

Let’s talk pensions:

I want to talk to anyone that will listen about pensions. If you’re about to retire, you probably know all about what they are, and if you are just starting out or retirement is a ways off, you might not think about your pension often. But we should all be thinking about them, arguing about them, and supporting PECG’s defense of them, and I’ll explain why.

Pensions are an incredible and underrated perk that we PECG members can sometimes take for granted. They are better than a 401K or related privately funded retirement plan in every way. They provide secure monthly income upon retirement for the rest of your life and are based on years of service and top salary. This means that you don’t need to worry about the market crashing immediately before or after your retirement. It means that you have peace of mind knowing that you will be cared for as a reward for your service to the state. In short, pensions are awesome and we should fight tooth and nail to keep them safe.

Our pensions are under attack from myriad groups across the political spectrum. There are yearly attacks in the courts and Legislature to cut benefits, privatize retirement plans, and

otherwise undermine the solvency of CalPERS. The attacks come in different forms but are typically couched under financial responsibility, worker freedom, or the idea that you could make more money with a private retirement fund. Don't be fooled, though. These arguments are disingenuous and typically come down to a dislike of state employees and private industry anger that the benefit makes government employment competitive.

As you know, we pay in part for our pension. Pension payouts in California provided \$28 billion in direct and indirect economic activity in 2019, with the most outsized benefits being in smaller and rural communities ([source](#)). Pensions provide a reliable income to our communities most vulnerable, and by extension, support businesses and local governments through individual spending and local tax revenues regardless of what is happening on Wall Street.

Pensions do not infringe upon your right to contribute to an individual retirement plan. The state does offer individual retirement plans through SavingsPlus and encourages us to contribute to these as well. You should use these tools to bolster your personal retirement savings, and SavingsPlus offers a number of funds for every investment strategy (yes, even target-date retirement funds for those who just don't want to mess with it!).

Some of you may be familiar with the old "3 legged stool" analogy for retirement planning. It goes like this; Your retirement plan is like a stool for you to sit on in your golden years. The three legs are social security, employer pension, and personal savings. Neither of the legs is strong enough to support a seated person alone. In recent decades, the third leg of this stool has been cut off in most of private industry, and workers are being told that the personal savings leg (think employer-sponsored retirement funds like 401K and Roth IRA) should be strong enough to hold them up. Here's the truth, though: Employer-defined contribution plans were never meant to replace pensions, merely make it easier for workers to expand their personal savings. So why are others angry that we can still sit on our stool? In my opinion, it is because it makes those trying to sell two-legged stools look bad.

Got something you need to get off your chest? A great picture you want to show off? A work story? A labor-related opinion you'd like to share? Write to Kevin at Kevin.Pfeiffer@parks.ca.gov, and we will put your work-appropriate submissions in this newsletter section in future issues.

Celebrating Milestones

Planning to retire in the near future or recently retired? Let us celebrate with you and send you PECG swag! If you have served at least 25 years, please fill out this form: [25 years or more](#).

Expecting a baby or your newborn is already here? We would love to celebrate with you by sending River City swag for your new addition. Sign up [HERE](#).

We look forward to celebrating with you!



New River City Section Officers



Director

Kevin is an engineering geologist with the California Department of Parks and Recreation in the Natural Resources Division. He has been a PECG member and a state employee for seven years and has served as President and Treasurer of the River City section and as a member of the PECG Political Liaison committee. Kevin is a registered PG and holds a bachelor of science from UC Davis. His primary interests with regard to union activities are pension protection and expansion, increased leave time, and expansion of health care benefits. In his free time, Kevin enjoys cooking, reading, and playing board games with friends.

President

Tim Chow is a Water Resource Control Engineer at the State Water Resources Control Board in the Division of Water Rights, Permitting Section. Before starting his state service, Tim worked as an Environmental Specialist in the Biotech industry and as an Engineer in consulting. He received his B.S. in Environmental Engineering from UC Riverside and is currently pursuing his M.S. in Civil Engineering at CSU Sacramento. He previously served as the Secretary for the PECG River City Section. When not at work, he can be found hiking, traveling, and talking to the monsters under his bed.



President Elect

KhristinaRae Leyba is a Water Resource Control Engineer working for the Cleanup Fund at the State Water Resource Control Board. She received a B.S. in Environmental Engineering from the University of California, San Diego. She began her career in the private sector as an engineer in San Diego prior to starting her state service in Sacramento. A few of her hobbies include mentoring, crabbing, camping, and having random dance-offs with her spouse and kids.



VP at Large

Emily Cushman is an Engineering Geologist working for the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board's Department of Defense Regulatory Unit. She received a B.S. in Soil and Water Science and B.A. in Geology, both from the University of California, Davis. When not protecting water quality, Emily skis, mountains bikes, and hosts dance parties in stunningly beautiful outdoor locales.



VP Supervisory

John is a Senior Engineering Geologist (Supervisory) with the Central Valley Water Board in Rancho Cordova and licensed Professional Geologist and Certified Hydrogeologist. He holds a B.S. in Geology from St. Lawrence University (Canton, NY) and an M.S. in Geology from Binghamton University (Binghamton, NY). Before employment at the Water Board, John started his career in the petroleum industry as a Borehole Geologist with Schlumberger in Bakersfield. John joined the Central Valley Water Board in 2016 as an Engineering Geologist with the Site Cleanup Program and was promoted into a Senior role with the Site Cleanup Program in April 2020. John is also the current President of the Sacramento Chapter of the Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists (AEG). This is John's first leadership role with PECG.



VP Rank and File

Brandon is a Water Resource Control Engineer at the California State Water Resources Control Board in the Division of Water Quality's NPDES Industrial and Construction Stormwater Unit. Before joining public service in 2018, Brandon was an environmental consultant in the Bay Area within the biomedical, healthcare, and technology sectors. He earned his B.S. in Biological System Engineering at the University of California, Davis, in 2016. In his spare time, Brandon enjoys backpacking, fishing, and hosting diner parties for his friends and family.



Secretary

Bryan is a Water Resource Control Engineer at the California State Water Resources Control Board in the Division of Water Quality Cannabis Regulatory Unit but started his career in the transportation industry. Bryan received a BS in Civil Engineering from California State Chico.

