

Union plans rally to pressure Jerry Brown for higher pay raises

Friday set for IUOE Unit 12 demonstration



The State Worker

Jon Ortiz chronicles civil-service life for California state workers

By Jon Ortiz, February 22, 2016

Another union, upset that Gov. Jerry Brown isn't offering more money at the bargaining table, plans to take its case to the street.

Members of the International Union of Operating Engineers in state Bargaining Unit 12 plan to rally at the Department of Human Resources Sacramento offices at 1515 S St. on Friday starting at 7:30 a.m., according to a IUOE release.

The union's 12,000 members are craft and maintenance workers whose jobs range from electricians and prison plumbers to hydroelectric plant operators and ferryboat masters. Many work on infrastructure for Caltrans and maintain the massive State Water Project.

Three years ago, Brown carved out raises of up to 37 percent for nearly 750 employees in the Department of Water Resources, which runs the water project. The pay hikes came after Brown's own managers and other officials warned that key staff who keep water flowing throughout the state were being lured away by better-paying government jobs and the private sector.

The remaining employees in the bargaining unit received a 3 percent increase and a one-time bonus of \$1,200. Union Director Tim Neep says wages for those members now lag the private sector by up to 25 percent.

Brown wants Unit 12 to pay new retiree health contributions that would incrementally rise to 4.6 percent of pay in 2019. The state would match. Employees would get a 3 percent raise in July and a 4 percent raise a year later. With anticipated health insurance premium hikes, Neep said Brown's offer, "will make us go backwards."

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