

**MINUTES
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING
CALIFORNIA UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BOARD
Docket No. 5712**

Open Session

The Appeals Board meeting convened at 11:00 a.m., April 16, 2025, with Chair Michael Allen presiding.

1. Roll Call: <u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Michael Allen, Chair	X	
Laura Kent-Monning, Vice-Chair	X	
Mike Eng	X	
Bob Wieckowski	X	
Richard Roth	X	

2. Approval of Minutes:

The Board approved the March 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes.

3. Chair's Report:

Since the last meeting, the Board resolved approximately 1,070 cases. Of these, 1,012 were processed through the CAMS, and 58 cases were completed in the legacy system. Chair Allen extended wishes for a happy Easter and Passover season and noted the arrival of spring. He also acknowledged the passing of Choco, the spouse of former Chair Robert Dresser, and extended condolences on behalf of the Board.

4. Board Member Reports:

Vice-Chair Kent-Monning commended the milestones achieved in Appellate Operations.

Member Eng thanked the agency staff for their work.

Member Wieckowski also thanked agency staff and acknowledged IT for their recent assistance.

5. Public Comment:

No public comment.

6. Chief ALJ/Executive Director, Michael Cutri Report:

Chief Cutri introduced the new Chief Information Officer, John Caampued. He also thanked Acting CIO Mark Smith and Assistant Director Greg Crettol for their leadership during the transition.

In March, the average daily appeals intake returned to levels consistent with the past 18 months after a brief rise in December and January. The field offices issued 25,800 decisions, resulting in an overall inventory reduction of nearly 3,000 cases. CUIAB moved approximately 1,300 cases via CAMS to normalize wait times across the state, and the average case age decreased to 47 days, significantly ahead of the national average.

Chief Cutri provided a retrospective on CUIAB's workload over the last five years. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CUIAB hired 116 new judges, 82 of whom remain with the agency. CUIAB resolved 1,590,639 appeals over the past five years, averaging over 318,000 appeals annually, constituting an increase of over 50% from 2019-2020. Chief Cutri thanked the ALJs and staff for their work and dedication.

Vice-Chair Kent-Monning thanked Chief Cutri for his report and congratulated the agency on its workload achievements while simultaneously implementing the CAMS system.

Member Eng echoed these sentiments and asked whether CUIAB had sufficient space to accommodate the Governor's return-to-office mandate. Chief Cutri confirmed that an analysis of the physical footprint had been completed, and the agency has sufficient space to accommodate all staff working in the office full-time.

Member Wieckowski asked for clarification on the hiring of 116 judges and whether the overall number of judges had grown to handle the increased caseload, or whether that was offset by attrition. Chief Cutri confirmed that it took several years to hire the 116 judges, and while some had separated from CUIAB during that period, the current number of judges is higher now than at the commencement of 2020. Member Wieckowski commented on the significant reduction in pending cases in the field from over 147,000 to 31,000. Chief Cutri stated CUIAB has a strong partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor and EDD, helping to forecast workload. Member Wieckowski inquired about the timeline of appeals for federal workers projected to become unemployed. Chief Cutri advised that previous

instances involving federal worker furloughs did not result in a large volume of claim appeals.

Member Roth inquired about hiring timelines for ALJs in the event of sudden increases in appeals and whether steps can be taken to minimize delays. Chief Cutri advised that CUIAB is efficient in its hiring processes and is currently staffed at higher levels compared to the beginning of the pandemic. Should workloads suddenly increase, CUIAB can quickly begin recruitment processes. Member Roth asked about CUIAB's ability to use retired annuitants in response to workload spikes. Chief Cutri advised that CUIAB has been able to utilize retired annuitants in this way.

Chair Allen commented on the challenges of ensuring that CUIAB is adequately staffed to respond to workload increases, while also avoiding the potential need to engage in layoffs when workload diminishes.

7. Supervising ALJ for Appellate Operations, Rebecca Bach Report:

Supervising Judge Bach reported that in March, 64.1% of second-level appeals were resolved within 45 days and 92.4% within 75 days. The average case age was 34.2 days, significantly ahead of the national average. From April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2025, Appellate Operations issued 58,211 decisions. Appellate Operations last met DOL's timelapse standards in March 2022.

Chair Allen, Vice-Chair Kent-Monning, Members Eng, Wieckowski, and Roth congratulated CUIAB for its achievement and thanked Judge Bach for her work and assistance.

8. Chief Information Officer, John Caampued Report:

Chief Information Officer Caampued reported that he is learning CUIAB's systems, goals, and objectives, and is grateful for the opportunity to join CUIAB's operations in serving the public.

Chair Allen, Vice-Chair Kent-Monning, Members Eng, Wieckowski, and Roth welcomed Chief Caampued to CUIAB.

9. Chief of Administrative Services, Robert Silva Report:

Chief Silva reported that five support staff were recently hired, which counterbalanced the five recent attritions. There are 16 pending support staff recruitments.

Chief Silva reported on safety trainings recently conducted by the California Highway Patrol at CUIAB offices throughout the state. CUIAB is in the process of retaining a vendor to provide CPR certification training to CUIAB employees.

Chief Silva discussed the 2025 Employee Performance Appraisals and upcoming deadlines to submit purchase orders prior to the end of the State Fiscal Year 2024/2025.

Chief Silva offered his condolences to former Chairperson Robert Dresser.

Chair Allen inquired whether the State had a policy regarding the availability of “Narcan” in state facilities. Chief Silva was unaware of a state policy for this, but will research it. Chair Allen thanked Chief Silva for ensuring CUIAB staff were given the opportunity to provide feedback during the construction of the budget.

Member Eng inquired about possible changes in the upcoming budget for CAMS. Chief Silva stated there was a slight increase in the Salesforce cost, and that funds were available to cover the remaining work on CAMS.

Member Roth offered comments regarding safety assessments and upgrades in the CUIAB offices.

Chair Allen asked about the potential implications of the return-to-office order on existing workspaces. Chief Silva advised that each department completed a survey and that CUIAB anticipates having sufficient facilities to accommodate this. Chair Allen inquired about ongoing safety issues for employees working in the Pasadena and San Diego field offices due to the wildfires. Chief Silva stated the Pasadena field office was briefly closed; the San Diego field office was not impacted.

Chief Cutri reported that since the last meeting, Orange County Office of Appeals Supervising Judge Brian Faulkner passed away. Chief Cutri offered his condolences to Judge Faulkner’s family, friends, and colleagues of the Orange County Office of Appeals.

Closed Session:

There was no closed session.

Adjournment