

California Energy Commission

Falsification of Time and Attendance Records (Case I2010-0844)

REPORT NUMBER I2011-1, CHAPTER 3, ISSUED AUGUST 2011

This investigation found that an employee and a personnel specialist at the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) falsified time and attendance records to enable the employee—at the time of her retirement—to receive a payment for unused annual leave that was higher than the amount to which she was entitled, costing the State an estimated \$6,589.

In reporting on the investigation, the California State Auditor (state auditor) made the following recommendations to the Energy Commission. The state auditor's determination regarding the current status of recommendations is based on the Energy Commission's response to the state auditor as of November 2011.

Recommendation 1—See pages 23—25 of the investigative report for information on the related finding.

The Energy Commission should seek to recover the amount it improperly paid the retiring employee for unused annual leave hours. If it is unable to recover any or all of this reimbursement, the Energy Commission should explain and document its reasons for not obtaining recovery of the funds.

Energy Commission's Action: Partially implemented.

The Energy Commission reported that in November 2011 it requested reimbursement from the retired employee for leave hours used inappropriately. The Energy Commission stated that if the retired employee failed to respond to its requests for reimbursement, it would forward this information to the Franchise Tax Board to collect the overpayments from the retired employee's future tax returns.

Recommendation 2.a—See pages 24 and 25 of the investigative report for information on the related finding.

The Energy Commission should take appropriate disciplinary action against the personnel specialist for making unauthorized changes to the retiring employee's leave balances.

Energy Commission's Action: Fully implemented.

The Energy Commission reported that the personnel specialist retired in June 2011. Nevertheless, in October 2011 the Energy Commission reported it had placed a memorandum in the personnel specialist's personnel file describing her actions related to the falsification of the retiring employee's time sheets and the unauthorized changes she made to the employee's leave balances.

Recommendation 2.b—See page 22 of the investigative report for information on the related finding.

The Energy Commission should monitor the personnel specialist's payroll and leave balance transactions to ensure that she follows Energy Commission policies.

Energy Commission's Action: Fully implemented.

The Energy Commission reported that the personnel specialist retired in June 2011, before it learned of our recommendation. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, it placed a memorandum in her personnel file describing her improper activities.

Recommendation 2.c—See page 22 of the investigative report for information on the related finding.

The Energy Commission should provide training to employees responsible for managing leave balance and time-sheet transactions to ensure that they understand the Energy Commission's policies for safeguarding their accuracy and respecting the limitations on the use of sick leave for family member illness as specified by the law and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

Energy Commission's Action: Fully implemented.

The Energy Commission stated that it provided training to its personnel specialists in September 2011. It stated that it stressed the importance of accuracy and thoroughness in processing leave usage, the limitations on the use of sick leave for family member illnesses as specified in various bargaining unit agreements, and obtaining supervisory approval on all amended time sheets.