Board of Administration Educational Day

Action Item – Proposed Decisions of Administrative Law Judges
9. Christopher M. Thompson

January 20, 2026

Item Name: Proposed Decision – In the Matter of the Cancellation of the Application for Industrial Disability Retirement of CHRISTOPHER M. THOMPSON, Respondent, and CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION, Respondent.

Program: Disability and Survivor Benefits Division

Item Type: Action

Parties' Positions

Staff argues that the Board of Administration should decline to adopt the Proposed Decision and remand the matter back to the Office of Administrative Hearings for the taking of further evidence.

Respondent Christopher M. Thompson's (Respondent) position is included in Attachment C, if any.

Respondent California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (Respondent CAL FIRE) position is included in Attachment C, if any.

Strategic Plan

This item is not a specific product of either the Strategic or Annual Plans. The determination of administrative appeals is a power reserved to the Board of Administration.

Procedural Summary

Respondent submitted an application for industrial disability retirement based on "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Back and Knee." CalPERS determined that Respondent was ineligible for industrial disability retirement because he had resigned under unfavorable circumstances with a pending Notice of Adverse Action seeking his termination, pursuant to the legal precedent set forth in *Haywood v. American River Fire Protection District* and CalPERS Precedential Decision *In the Matter of the Accepting the Application for Industrial Disability Retirement of Phillip MacFarland* (2016) Precedential Decision No. 16-01. Respondent appealed this determination and the matter was heard by the Office of Administrative Hearings on November 24, 2025. Respondent and Respondent CAL FIRE did not appear at the hearing,

despite both receiving timely and appropriate notice of the hearing. Therefore, a default was taken under Government Code section 11520 as to both Respondent and Respondent CAL FIRE. A Proposed Decision was issued on December 10, 2025, granting the appeal.

Alternatives

A. For use if the Board decides to adopt the Proposed Decision as its own Decision:

   RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System hereby adopts as its own Decision the Proposed Decision dated December 10, 2025, concerning the appeal of Christopher M. Thompson; RESOLVED FURTHER that this Board Decision shall be effective 30 days following mailing of the Decision.

B. For use if the Board decides not to adopt the Proposed Decision, and to decide the case upon the record:

   RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, after consideration of the Proposed Decision dated December 10, 2025, concerning the appeal of Christopher M. Thompson, hereby rejects the Proposed Decision and determines to decide the matter itself, based upon the record produced before the Administrative Law Judge and such additional evidence and arguments that are presented by the parties and accepted by the Board; RESOLVED FURTHER that the Board's Decision shall be made after notice is given to all parties.

C. For use if the Board decides to remand the matter back to the Office of Administrative Hearings for the taking of further evidence:

   RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, after consideration of the Proposed Decision dated December 10, 2025, concerning the appeal of Christopher M. Thompson, hereby rejects the Proposed Decision and refers the matter back to the Administrative Law Judge for the taking of additional evidence as specified by the Board at its meeting.

D. Precedential Nature of Decision (two alternatives; either may be used):
   1. For use if the Board wants further argument on the issue of whether to designate its Decision as precedential:

      RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System requests the parties in the matter concerning the appeal of Christopher M. Thompson, as well as interested parties, to submit written argument regarding whether the Board's Decision in this matter should be designated as precedential, and that the Board will consider the issue whether to designate its Decision as precedential at a time to be determined.

   2. For use if the Board decides to designate its Decision as precedential, without further argument from the parties.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, hereby designates as precedential its Decision concerning the appeal of Christopher M. Thompson.

Budget and Fiscal Impacts: Not applicable

Attachments

Attachment A: Proposed Decision

Attachment B: Staff's Argument

Attachment C: Respondent(s) Argument(s)

Kimberly A. Malm
Deputy Executive Officer
Customer Services and Support