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From: **Peter Van Meter** [REDACTED]

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Subject: Marin Independent Journal Endorses Marin-Sonoma Tie

To: votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov

Commissioners -

The Marin Independent Journal, Marin County's leading newspaper, urges the Commission to keep Marin and Sonoma Counties together and break the past link to San Francisco. The paper's May 1 Editorial points out many examples of the North Bay's community of interest, and the need for local representation for this area.

A copy is attached.

Thank you.

Peter Van Meter, Principal

MyCRE LLC

[REDACTED]
Sausalito, CA 94965
[REDACTED]

Former Sausalito City Council Member
CRC Applicant

Opinion

Marin Independent Journal
marinij.com/opinion | A MediaNews Group NEWSPAPER

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EDITORIAL

New lines should keep Marin and Sonoma together

THE STATE panel redrawing legislative districts should do everything it can to keep Marin and Sonoma counties together.

The temptation to carve up districts to protect incumbents is impossible for politicians to resist, which is why voters approved putting the task into the hands of an independent panel.

We hope that common sense and geographical bonds guide the panel when adjusting boundaries in the North Bay.

The task of redrawing California's lines for congressional, state Senate and Assembly districts takes place every decade after federal census population figures are announced.

The goal is to have the same number of people in each of the districts.

Marin's Assembly and House districts are similar right now, composing all of Marin and a big chunk of Sonoma County, which has about twice Marin's population. State Senate districts are larger because there are fewer districts.

The 3rd state Senate District includes all of Marin, a slice of southern Sonoma and some heavily populated portions of San Francisco.

Marin's Assembly and congressional districts do a better job of reflecting the state redistricting commission's goal of drawing districts so they maintain "communities of interest."

Marin's regional ties with Sonoma have grown stronger over the past 30 years, with shared interests in transportation, agriculture, housing, water and workforce housing. The counties also have similar suburban and rural landscapes.

The two counties no longer can be just considered to be bedroom communities for

San Francisco.

Despite those realities, there appears to be growing political pressure to make Marin part of a San Francisco district. Rep. Lynn Woolsey's potential retirement means politicians would love to see her district redrawn to prevent other lawmakers from losing their seats.

For Marin, this could mean having our legislative representation politically dominated by San Francisco or East Bay politicians.

Marin's state Senate seat is an example of what could happen. Since 1984, when the district was redrawn to include San Francisco, the seat has been held by San Franciscans. In 2008, Mark Leno needed only a few votes from north of the Golden Gate Bridge to win the Democratic primary.

Former Marin Assemblyman Joe Nation won in Marin and Sonoma, but finished third overall. San Francisco's voting power essentially made Marin's vote irrelevant.

Supervisor Judy Arnold, who served as a Marin aide for two state senators from San Francisco, says Marin's issues often took a backseat to those across the Golden Gate.

Voters placed the job of redrawing boundaries in the hands of independent citizens to reflect the interests of their communities rather than politicians' interest in winning re-election or higher office.

The commission will be asking residents for their opinions on the new lines.

You can bet that politicians and special interest groups will make their opinions known.

We hope the commissioners will focus instead on people and fair representation — and ignore politics.