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June 16, 2011

Dear California Citizens Redistricting Commissioners,

As the representative of the Calexico New River Committee, I am concerned about the current draft maps you have drawn for the Congressional, State Senate and State Assembly districts for our region. The CNRC was established in 1999 by a group of concerned citizens with the vision to eliminate the negative health and environmental impacts of the New River and the threat it represents to the Salton Sea.

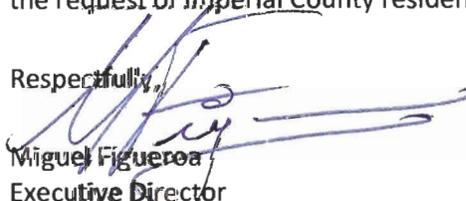
The CNRC co-sponsored AB 1079 in 2009, this bill requires that the California Mexico Border Relations Council (Border Council) develop a plan to guide implementation of the New River Improvement Project which is intended to "study, monitor, remediate and enhance the New River water quality in the County of Imperial to protect human health, and develop a river parkway suitable for public use and enjoyment." Thanks to the joint efforts of organizations and voters in the Imperial and Coachella Valleys this project is a reality.

Last month during your first round of public comment input hearings you received numerous requests, both in writing and in-person, to keep the Imperial and Coachella Valleys as one contiguous community of interest. Similarly, you also received requests from members of the Eastern San Diego Communities asking to **not** be included in a district which includes us here in Imperial County. After reviewing the drafts released on June 10th, it is clear to me that our voices were once again not heard.

Similarly, both Valley's also share many positive attributes which include; vast natural resources which have already put us on the map as the hub for Renewable Energy generation potential, Enterprise Zones and other incentive programs for businesses, shared service territory in the Imperial Irrigation District (public utility company), agricultural based economies which have provided jobs to local farm workers, shared waterways and canals, and deep cultural ties between families in both Valleys.

We deserve representation at the Federal and State level that takes into account the needs of our desert community and does not simply lump us with San Diego only because we share the U.S.-Mexico Border. Furthermore, this Commission has an opportunity to embolden our California Congressional delegation by assigning two representatives to the U.S.-Mexico Border rather than keeping the status-quo. The current district draft maps will disenfranchise our communities and continue to keep us in the shadows of our large urban communities to the west. Please reconsider your initial draft and listen to the request of Imperial County residents.

Respectfully,


Miguel Figueroa
Executive Director
Calexico New River Committee