

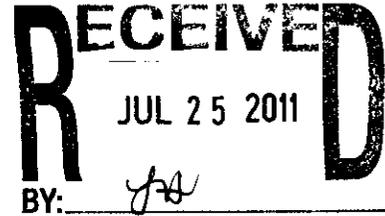


CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

July 22, 2011

California Citizens Redistricting Commission
 901 P Street, Suite 154-A
 Sacramento, CA 95814



Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the redistricting maps that were recently released. I know that you and your staff have spent many hours on these maps, and I commend you for your efforts and your willingness to serve.

I would like to raise a concern about the proposed state senate districts. In the most recently released map, Turlock, the home of CSU Stanislaus, is placed in the Foothill District. I believe that the constituents in Turlock, including the university, would be better served by placing the city in the Merced District. Since the boundary between those two districts lies directly south of Turlock, shifting the boundary to include Turlock in the Merced District would be relatively easy. To account for the change in population, portions of the Merced District in Merced, Madera or Fresno counties could be shifted into the Foothill District. It may make the most sense to shift the small towns in Fresno county, like Fowler and Kingsburg, into the Foothill District to keep them with Clovis.

Pushing the university into the Foothill District separates the university from the majority of the surrounding communities that it serves and from many of its students who commute to the university from these surrounding communities. By placing the university on the fringe of a massive district among communities that the university has little or no connection to, the university will have to struggle to be heard among the disparate interests. This is of particular concern to me during this time of great financial uncertainty for public higher education. Separating the university from its surrounding communities makes it much more difficult for the university to have strong representation in the State Senate.

From a wider perspective, keeping Turlock with Merced would make for a better Merced District by keeping natural constituency interests aligned. Turlock is in the heart of the Central Valley and is rooted in an agriculturally-based economy. These agricultural interests have little in common with the communities in the foothills and mountains.

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Turlock is very much interconnected, however, with Merced and the other communities in the Merced District. They have agricultural economies with similar concerns about farm labor issues, water supply, and agricultural regulations. They rely on the same transportation corridors and these corridors connect these communities to each other as well as to the rest of the state: Highway 99 connects Turlock to Merced to the south and Ceres a few miles to the north, Patterson lies directly west on a county expressway which also leads to Interstate 5, and State Highway 140 goes south out of Turlock to Los Banos. They share concerns about similar land use issues, the spread of gang violence, and air quality.

Most of these communities, including Merced, Ceres, Los Banos, and Madera also lie within the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). It is critical that Turlock be placed in a state senate district that lies within the SJVAPCD. The SJVAPCD has become one of the most prominent regulating agencies in the Central Valley and many of these regulations affect our agricultural and agricultural-related businesses, other businesses, and the university. With an increasing number of regulations coming from the SJVAPCD, it is crucial that Turlock be represented by a state senator who will be sensitive to concerns about air quality and these regulations. Only a sliver of the Foothill District lies within the SJVAPCD, and the foothill and mountain communities do not have the severe air quality issues that are the result of lying within a valley basin.

Pushing Turlock into the Foothill District only places it at an extreme disadvantage. I hope that you will consider placing Turlock with Merced and the allied interests in the Merced District.

I would be happy to discuss these concerns with you should you have any questions. I may be reached at [REDACTED]

Regards,

Hamid Shirvani
President