

From: **Susana Wood** [REDACTED]  
Date: Thu, Mar 17, 2011 at 12:52 PM  
Subject: Recommendation of Technical Consultant Douglas Johnson  
To: [votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov](mailto:votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov).

**To the Members of the California Independent Citizens Districting Commission:**

The purpose of this communication is to highly recommend to the Commission Mr. Doug Johnson who serves as President of the National Demographics Corporation, a firm that specializes in government elections and districting matters. I have worked with Mr. Johnson many times over the past five years and have always found him to be highly knowledgeable in his field (and related fields) and the consummate professional.

As the City Attorney for the City of Modesto, I first met Doug in 2006 when my City engaged him to assist our Charter Review Commission in studying options for moving the City from a General Election system to a Council Districting system. He spent many months with the Commission, answered all their questions, responded promptly to all of their research requests and requests for presentations. He was always approachable, always available and always prepared. As you are undoubtedly aware, whenever a government body considers changing its form of elections it is a highly complex task fraught with many obstacles, not the least of which are politics and emotions. While Doug was always aware of these challenges due to his many years of experience, he remained neutral and professional at all times, providing the Commissioners with the information they needed to make the decisions in a straightforward and unbiased style.

The result was that after months of deliberation, the Charter Review Commission made a clear and thoughtful recommendation to the City Council that ultimately resulted in a positive vote by the Modesto electorate to move to a Council districting system.

Subsequently, when the City commissioned its inaugural Districting Commission to adopt a districting plan for the City, we again engaged the services of Mr. Johnson to assist this Commission in studying and understanding the complexities of adopting a Council district map for the City. None of the Commissioners had any prior experience in districting and Mr. Johnson was invaluable in breaking down all the required elements for their consideration and led them through a number of public hearings and workshops that enabled the Commission to fully engage the public in drawing a district map for the City. This also included creating a public website where members of the public could draw and submit their own district map for the Commissions consideration. These efforts paid off tremendously for the Commission as they received more than 32 maps for their consideration and gave the public confidence that their comments had been heard. As the City Attorney, who must also remain impartial and unbiased in my opinions to the Commission, I was again very appreciative of his professional yet impartial approach with the Commission, and I too learned a great deal from him. Ultimately, he helped them find, dissect and understand the information that they needed to make a sound districting decision.

For all of these reasons, understanding that challenging work that your Commission is charged with, I am very enthusiastically recommending Mr. Johnson to you. If there is any more questions I can answer, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED] or by telephone at [REDACTED].

Respectfully,

*Susana Alcala Wood*

City Attorney

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City of Modesto, California

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