



March 22, 2011

Citizens Redistricting Commission
c/o California Secretary of State
1500 11th St, Sacramento, CA, 95814
Via email to: votersfirstact@sos.ca.gov

Subject: Request for public hearing in Bakersfield

Dear Commissioners,

We, the undersigned community members and organizations, are writing to request that the Commission hold at least one of its Central Valley region hearings to collect community input in Bakersfield, CA. In collaboration with the Greenlining Institute, we have been monitoring this redistricting process and have a vested interest in ensuring the lines drawn in 2011 fairly reflect our communities. It is our understanding, based on the Center for Collaborative Policy's outreach proposal and the Commission's recent conversations about how it will conduct its public hearings, that the decision about where to hold these hearings will soon be decided. And while we have been pleased to see Bakersfield listed as a potential location for a hearing on recent draft calendars, we would like to take this final opportunity to urge the commission to approve at least one hearing in Bakersfield. Alternative locations for the Central Valley (i.e. Fresno) are well over 100 miles away or a 2+ hour drive.

According to the recent release of the 2010 Census data, the city of Bakersfield experienced a nearly 41% population increase as of April 2010. With 100,426 new residents, Bakersfield has seen the largest numeric growth of any city in California over the past 10 years. Consequently, we urge the Commission to schedule at least one public hearing in the city of Bakersfield for the following reasons:

- A meeting held in the South Coast region or elsewhere requires a several-hour drive, which may impair the community's ability to be present and participate in this important process;
- There is an active community in the Kern County and Bakersfield area who would like to provide input to the Commission;
- Bakersfield is centrally located just one hour from the coast and desert areas; the addition of a Bakersfield hearing better enables communities in and around these areas to participate, which would not otherwise be possible with current meeting locations requiring well over an hour's drive.

Knowing that the Commission will need to find a suitable location to comply with accessibility needs and Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act law, we wish to suggest the following central locations which may have suitable space to meet your needs: Beale Main Library (Auditorium), Department of Health, CSU Bakersfield, or perhaps the City of Bakersfield.

In an effort to gather community input that best represents California's ever changing population, we strongly recommend that the Commission consider our request. If we can serve as a resource in your efforts to secure a meeting space, please do not hesitate to contact Lori de Leon at (661) 322-3343. We look forward to seeing the final calendar in the next few days.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Camilla Chavez, Executive Director
& Lori de Leon, Community Redistricting Leader
The Dolores Huerta Foundation

Renee Donato Nelson, President
Clean Water and Air Matter (CWAM)

Orson Aguilar, Executive Director
The Greenlining Institute