

April 11, 2011

Re: A Large East-West Northern California district: Why it's a bad idea.

Dear Commissioner di Giulio,

At the CRC input hearing in Marysville California, you asked the question, "What about an East-West district. Wouldn't one large district be helpful as far as building roads to connect the coastal counties to the central and eastern counties." I would like reply to this and other important issues in his letter.

The geography of California make East-West corridors between the coast, the Central Valley and the eastern counties bordering Nevada problematic. The economies of the three areas are organized along the natural North-South axis where goods and services flow along existing arteries. Current fiscal realities make expensive East-West road projects unlikely regardless of how the commission redistricts.

As noted in Redding, the difficulties for politicians representing a potential huge East-West district are important. Yes, we can talk on the telephone and send emails. But all politics is local. A political leader based in Sacramento with most of his/her voters in the southern part of a huge East-West district would visit the northernmost counties infrequently. Rural voters in small counties would *not* get better representation.

Additionally, a huge East-West district would create less political clout for the new, clumped together voters than currently. As noted in Redding, the voters who would occupy a huge East-West district have three Congressmen and three State Senators between them now. An East-West district would mean one shared US Congressman and one shared California State Senator, a prescription for far less political influence.

Another issue is that the partisan politics of a huge East-West district might be rancorous. Voters along the California coast are more liberal and Democratic, while voters in the Central Valley and along the Nevada border are more conservative and Republican. While Republicans would prevail in a large East-West district, it would be wiser to allow the coast liberals to keep their political interests intact.

In Redding, the input was 70/30 for East-West. In Marysville, input was 95/5 for North-South. The facts and consensus are with North-South redistricting.

Regards,

David Salaverry
CCRC, California Conservative Redistricting Coalition