



# city of san luis obispo

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
990 Palm Street ■ San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-3249 ■ 805/781-7119

April 19, 2011

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Per CS

Dr. Gambino Aguirre, Chair  
and Members, California Citizens Re-Districting Commission  
1103 K St., Ste. 101  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Commissioners:

This letter will follow up on testimony that I provided to your commission on Wednesday, April 13 in San Luis Obispo. My testimony was presented as my own personal views, and not those of the City of San Luis Obispo. I did of course, acknowledge the fact that I am a member of the Council and Vice Mayor; however this testimony did not reflect any official position of the City.

I would like to summarize the most important points of my presentation to you:

1. I welcomed you to our city, and expressed our “bottom line” interest in maintaining the integrity of our City in any redistricting scheme for our State or Congressional legislative seats. I did note (facetiously) that there is a widespread view that culturally and geographically, Southern California “begins” at the Madonna Inn... but it would most unwise to act on that “common knowledge” by dividing our city!
2. I noted that if possible, our County should also be included in whole within State and Congressional districts – but if our county is to be divided, please do not yield easily to the temptation to divide us at “Cuesta Grade,” the mountain range that rises between Atascadero and San Luis Obispo. The reasons for this request include the following items:
  - a. Our City gains most of its water supply from the Salinas River watershed north of Cuesta Grade, via the Salinas Reservoir (Santa Margarita Lake) and Nacimiento Reservoir. Nacimiento is owned and managed by Monterey County under an agreement with our County whereby we obtain primary water rights to that reservoir.
  - b. At least with respect to State legislative districts, it would be easier for our city to deal with one Assemblyman and one Senator who would represent both us and North County communities who are also dependent on the Nacimiento Water Project – and if possible, with portions (or all) of Monterey County.
3. The same concern does not apply with respect to our Congressional representation. I would note, however, that any redistricting plan to combine our County with adjacent counties should only consider aligning us north and/or south with our neighbors in Monterey or Santa Barbara Counties. Please avoid any configuration of our Congressional Districts that would continue to have us sharing representation with Kern County, our neighbor to the east. The north/south alignment is the corridor that has historically united our communities in San Luis Obispo, ever since the El Camino Real first came into use in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. I ran a land use consulting business for almost 20 years here in San Luis Obispo, and my clients extended from Salinas south to Malibu. Our media markets, our demographics, our system of agriculture, and our travel and business patterns would all point to a combination of San Luis Obispo County with one or both of our neighbors to the north or south.

## city of san luis OBISPO

Letter to Citizens Redistricting Commission

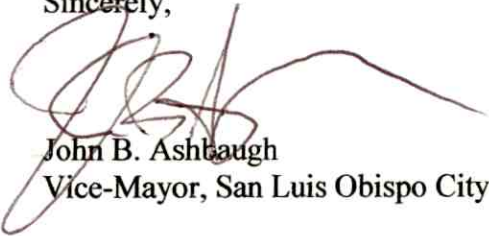
April 19, 2011

Page Two

To further assist your ability to recall my testimony, I had mentioned in my testimony on the issue of our water supply the very real threat of quagga mussels. This reference drew an inquiry from Commissioner Malloy, and I hope that in my return to the lectern, I was able to clarify it for you: The quaggas are a non-native invasive species that has already caused catastrophic damages to the water supply systems dependent on Lake Mead and many other Southern California lakes. We are working with Monterey County to try to keep quagga mussels out of Nacimiento Lake, but it may require State legislative help and the intervention of State agencies such as Fish and Game or Boating and Waterways in order to prevent boaters bringing their watercraft with "hitchhiking" quagga mussels into the Nacimiento watershed.

I very much appreciate your taking the time to visit our county and obtain our testimony. I could tell by your attention even to such an arcane issue as quagga mussels, and at such a late stage of the evening, that you are taking your job very seriously. Thank you for considering my views on this very important responsibility, and for your attention to all those who have come before you to testify.

Sincerely,



John B. Ashbaugh

Vice-Mayor, San Luis Obispo City Council