

May 19, 2011

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Dear Commissioners,

I write you today on behalf of not only myself but also my family, all longtime residents of Imperial County. As you redraw our State and Federal districts, it is extremely important that you please consider the Southeast desert region as one. Under the current system, our county is almost always considered part of the San Diego County region and as a result, our financial resources and public policy priorities are often overshadowed by the large population numbers and affluent communities west of Imperial County.

Today, our entire State of California is represented by solely one Congressional district which has ultimately resulted in limited representation to our border community. Imperial County has especially been neglected in this area as we have seen our International Port of Entry in Calexico lose funding time and time again to our neighboring San Diego County. In contrast to our sole representative at the Federal level, the State of Texas has a Congressional delegation of 8 members who can lobby for their regions more effectively.

Furthermore, Imperial County and the entire Coachella Valley also share important environmental concerns, natural resources, transportation corridors, and population characteristics which make us a closely aligned region. In the past two years, Imperial County and the Eastern Riverside County desert have seen a surge in development and potential interest from developers who wish to build out renewable energy generation plants here. This new industry will bring much needed job growth to our regions and policymakers, workforce development boards, and businesses in both Valleys have begun to coordinate with one another so we build partnerships that are mutually beneficial. One great example of this coordination is the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership and the Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation working hand in hand to host annual Energy Summits, policy forums, and community forums in both Counties.

The Salton Sea, Colorado River, and New River are also important shared priorities/concerns which must be protected and ultimately prioritized by our State and Federal representatives.

Ultimately, I believe that our State Senate District and Congressional District should more closely resemble what the State Assembly district currently represents. Please consider the similarities between median incomes, unemployment rates, education levels, and ethnic makeup of population, as much as you will consider our shared public policy priorities when you redraw our boundaries.