

To: California Redistricting Commission

From: Timothy P. Wendler, member of State Advisory Committee, City Commissioner, Land Trust Board President

Subject: Why Glendale/Burbank/Pasadena is a Community of Interest

From an environmental perspective, the cities of Pasadena, Glendale, and Burbank form a community of interest.

Community Environmental Organizations: Due to the unique environmental concerns of these communities, many grassroots advocacy groups have coalesced in the area and they demonstrate a strong, common environmental ethic in the communities. These groups often work in partnership, with the common goals of land preservation, conservation, restoration, as well as education. A short list of groups includes the Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy, San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy, Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, Volunteers Organized in Conserving the Environment, Glendale Parks & Open Space Foundation, Crescenta Valley Clean and Green, Burbank Wildlife Protection Group, several Sierra Club groups and Pasadena Audubon, just to name a few.

Open Spaces and Fire Issues: Pasadena, Glendale, and Burbank are nestled up against the San Gabriel and Verdugo Mountains at the northern edge of the Los Angeles basin. Because of their proximity to these wild areas and the Angeles National Forest, they share many of the same environmental concerns. The forest-border communities all share a rare Mediterranean chaparral ecosystem and wildlife corridors that are essential to the survival of many native species.

The management of chaparral ecosystems can be complicated and challenging, and a balance between fire-hazard reduction and nature conservation must be achieved. Chaparral is highly flammable, and because of successful suppression and management, intense wildfires, such as the recent Station Fire, is unavoidable.

The Station Fire, the largest wildfire in modern Los Angeles County history, burned through 161,000 acres of the Angeles National Forest during the span of 52 days. The fire destroyed more than 200 homes and structures, and killed two firefighters. Therefore, it is crucial that cities along the border of the Angeles Forest work together to preserve the natural habitat, which is home to unique vegetation and a diverse and abundant wildlife, but also to protect their residents from the hazards presented by nature. Residential communities now line the border of densely forested areas and remain under the constant threat of large fires. In addition to the problems posed by annual fires, these foothill communities now face the additional challenges of flooding and mudslide, aftereffects of the Station Fire, and will remain a concern the five years following the fire.

Trail Connections: Additionally, parts of the three cities, along with several smaller communities, form the eastern end of the Rim of the Valley Corridor and Trail.

Water Supply and Quality: Finally, due to past heavy industry in the region, all three cities struggle with ground water contaminants including volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and hexavalent chromium. Glendale is pioneering a treatment facility to remove hexavalent chromium from ground water that will be of great use to its neighboring cities. This project was funded by a combination of local, state and federal funds.