

Subject: Northern California Congressional Districts

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Conversation: Northern California Congressional Districts

If we got to draw the Congressional District(CD) boundaries in Northern California, this is how we would do it. First we would recognize that Northern California is sparsely populated. This is a commonality that is shared from the coast, to the valley, to the mountains. Next, we would identify the economic interests that are so important to further defining our communities. We find that Northern California counties have little in the way of manufacturing but are dominated by agriculture and natural resources. Humboldt, Mendocino, Shasta, Siskiyou, and Plumas are the top five timber producing counties in California and they accounted for 70% of the State's timber production in 2007. Coincidentally, these counties include vast swaths of federal lands that cover more than 50% of their entire geography. We think these counties belong in the same CD. Cattle (beef or dairy), hay, and pasture are also agricultural products that are very important to these communities as are recreation and tourism. These are also major economic components shared by Del Norte, Trinity, Modoc, Lassen, and Tehama counties. In our view, these ten Northern California counties should be combined with Lake County (the northern half of Lake County is covered by the Mendocino National Forest) and northern Sonoma County to create an entirely new and rational CD. The proposed CD would also include four State and one Federal fish hatchery that produce the anadromous fish that are important to both the inland and coastal economies of Northern California. The new CD would include the counties that comprise Caltrans Districts 1 and 2. This CD would not be compact, but lack of compactness is one of the qualities that defines our community.

We would also like to propose a CD for the area that has historically made up the southern portion of our current gerrymandered district. Rice production and processing dominates the economy of Butte, Glenn, Colusa, Sutter, Yolo, and northwestern Placer (Lincoln area) counties. Rice is also a major component of Yolo County's agricultural economy. We think these valley counties should be combined to form another CD with a shared community interest.

We understand the challenges that the Commission faces to make the entire jigsaw puzzle fit together at the end. We have attached a map that roughly shows five congressional districts of communities in Northern California. We understand that many reservations have been expressed about changing the dynamic of the formation of political districts in our part of California. It is natural for people to fear change. But we don't think that the voters of California formed a Citizens Redistricting Commission to protect the status quo.

Thank you for considering our suggestions.

Shasta County Citizens for Democracy