



City of Sierra Madre



Citizens Redistricting Commission
1130 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814

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MAY 2 2011

Per _____

Region # 4:

Los Angeles
Region

May 19, 2011

Dear Commission,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Sierra Madre City Council¹, extend our gratitude for your willingness to undertake a most challenging task. For the first time, the State's redistricting will be in the hands of respected citizen volunteers, and will undoubtedly result in fairer, more coherent legislative district boundaries. On behalf of the entire Sierra Madre City Council I write to express our position regarding the drawing of legislative district lines affecting the north and west San Gabriel Valley.

We believe the criteria for drawing those lines set forth in the mandates given the commission by Propositions 11 and 20 are best met by joining together those cities and communities spanning the corridor running west to east along the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountain range and whose main transit interests are defined by the 210 freeway. Generally speaking this community of interests begins with La Canada to the west and runs east up to and including the City of Claremont. In Sierra Madre in particular we share a strong community of interests with our contiguous neighbors, more specifically Pasadena, Altadena, Arcadia and Monrovia. This community of interests is defined by a variety of compelling factors, the most significant of which are set forth below.

1. Natural Features

With respect to Sierra Madre and its neighboring communities nature itself has bound us to our neighboring communities in ways the logically dictate common political concerns. Each is bounded on the north by the San Gabriel Mountains and each jurisdiction has lands that extend high into the foothills and abut a national forest. Residents in each of these communities not only use, but care for, the trails, roads and hillsides that mark the cities of foothills. Much of the land

¹ Mayor John Buchanan, Mayor Pro Tem Josh Moran, Council Member MaryAnn MacGillivray, Council Member Joseph M. Mosca, Council Member Nancy Walsh

Sierra Madre, CA 91024

is held in conservancies or otherwise protected by common zoning patterns that compliment the strong desire of residents to preserve their natural beauty and recreational value.

2. Public Safety

Many times the resources of these communities have been brought to bear jointly to fend off devastating fires. In 2009, the communities were threatened by, first, the Morris Fire and then the Station Fire. 2008 brought the Santa Anita Fire that threatened Sierra Madre specifically. 1993 brought the Kinneloa Fire that destroyed or damaged 115 homes in Pasadena, just to our west. Considering that many of these fires are followed by debris and mudflow concerns as evidenced in La Canada and Sierra Madre, it is easy to see the connection that these cities have in the protection of our residents. As a result Sierra Madre firefighters have stood with their colleagues based in Pasadena, Arcadia, Monrovia, and Altadena as the first line of defense to these life threatening situations. These communities are also members of the Area C collection of cities that provide mutual aid through the Verdugo dispatch system. We have mutual aid arrangements with our neighboring cities for other public safety services as well. This includes a contract between Pasadena and Sierra Madre for the use Pasadena's police helicopter which flies public safety missions across the foothills. In addition Sierra Madre's famous volunteer Search & Rescue team has saved countless lives in the mountains above each community and beyond.

3. Water

Water inextricably links Sierra Madre, Arcadia, Pasadena and Altadena. Sierra Madre and Arcadia share an important drinking water source that is located in the Big Santa Anita Canyon. Over the years, our two cities have worked together and established cross connections to ensure the reliability and availability of drinking water for our residents. Sierra Madre, Arcadia, Pasadena and Altadena are all water producers in the Raymond Groundwater Basin, and, with water master oversight, share in the management of that critical resource. Our cities have complex agreements for the sharing of water, especially in emergencies, and our water supplies are governed by longstanding adjudications that actually define the political history underlying our common boundaries.

This fundamental connection among our communities naturally creates common political interests as most clearly reflected in the fact Sierra Madre and Arcadia have collaborated for over 15 years in seeking and realizing federal funding for mutually beneficial water projects. Moreover, as members of the Raymond Basin, Pasadena and Altadena have recently seen success in identifying federal funding for groundwater replenishment projects, to the benefit of all four agencies.

On a related matter, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board is developing new standards for stormwater quality in the region. Most of the cities in this proposed "Foothill Corridor" share not only the same watershed (Los Angeles River), but also the unique challenges to being connected to the foothills.

2. Transportation and Economy

Apart from natural forces, common development and planning link our communities. The 210 freeway is the main transportation artery of the North and West San Gabriel Valley and, indeed, of all communities along the foothill corridor. No man made feature better defines our community of interests. All communities along the foothills - and particularly Pasadena, Altadena, Arcadia, Monrovia and Sierra Madre – have a vital interest in the extension and completion of the Gold Line from its current terminus in East Pasadena to points further east along the 210.

California policy calls for regional planning that aligns housing needs and transit planning, including transit centers. For the foothill communities, that means the 210 freeway. Thus compliance with AB32 and SB375 can only be accomplished with the close cooperation of cities, especially when they are tied together by transportation considerations.

Of course, Sierra Madre residents frequent the nearby shops and malls of Arcadia, Pasadena and Monrovia. Likewise, our small (but wonderful) downtown is the beneficiary of regular visits from our neighbors. Each of us on the City Council can attest to conversations on the sidewalks of our downtown with residents from Arcadia, Pasadena, Altadena and Monrovia who say they spend the better part of many days in Sierra Madre, which they consider their second “home”. Of course residents of each community can be found plying their trade in the others. More than a few Sierra Madreans earn a living working at the “Great Race Place” – world renowned and historic Santa Anita Racetrack just to the south along Santa Anita and Baldwin Avenues.

4. Education

The welfare of our children joins our communities in ways that cannot be separated. Most of Sierra Madre is part of the Pasadena Unified School district that includes Altadena. The part that is not is part of the Arcadia Unified School District and the common interests this creates should not be hindered by invisible voting district lines that run down Michillinda Avenue to the west or Santa Anita Avenue to the east. At Michillinda (the western boundary of Sierra Madre) there is an all girls' Catholic high school (Alverno) that sits within Sierra Madre's city limits while on the other side of the street a block away there is a coed Catholic high school (La Salle) that sits inside the city of Pasadena. Heading further west along Sierra Madre Boulevard is the public Pasadena High School. Most of Sierra Madre's high school age students attend one of these institutions. Sierra Madre itself is home to a high performing, public elementary and middle school which students from all across Altadena and Pasadena also attend. Sierra Madre, Altadena, Pasadena and the parents from these communities join together in one of the most vibrant support networks that has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support the school.

5. Recreation

Our children share common recreational interests as well. The little leagues in each community “interleague” with one another to provide a breadth of competition. Sierra Madre's highly regarded girls softball program draws young women from all nearby communities while Sierra

Madre children reap the rewards of the AYSO soccer programs provided by our neighbors. Our cities have always cooperated with each other for resources such as playing fields in an effort to make sure that every youth in the region has the most opportunities possible.

6. Media

An additional piece of evidence that the “Foothill Corridor” is a natural “Community of Interest” can be found in the organization of local media, especially print media. The Pasadena Star News, Mountain Views News, and the “Weeklys” each have a section for the neighboring foothill cities.

As I hope you will agree, nature, political history, common development, and the social bonds of education and economy have all created a community of interests among Sierra Madre and its neighbors along the foothills. Needless to say, past redistricting has ignored these seemingly inescapable facts to the detriment of our city and our neighbors. We ask the commission give recognition politically to that which nature, social compact and history has bound together over many years.

I thank you again for your hard work and would be happy to clarify any of these points or answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Buchanan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent than the last name "Buchanan".

John Buchanan, Mayor
City of Sierra Madre

Council Members
Mayor Pro Tem Josh Moran
Councilmember MaryAnn MacGillivray
Councilmember Joseph M. Mosca
Councilmember Nancy Walsh

Region #4: Los Angeles
Region

May 11, 2011

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MAY 23 2011

Citizens Redistricting Commission
1130 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814

Per _____

Dear Commissioners:

Introduction

Currently, I'm the Director of Urban Studies at CSU Los Angeles. I have three degrees in Urban Planning, CSU Northridge, B.A., UC Berkeley, M.C.R.P., UCLA, Ph.D.

I participated in MALDEF's 1990 Redistricting Plan, and was instrumental in developing the concept of 'nesting', placing assembly districts within state senate district. I was a senior consultant for the Elected Charter Reform Commission for the City of Los Angeles (1998-99). I authored the report, "The Future of Los Angeles City Government." I incorporated a section recommending an independent redistricting commission for the City of Los Angeles, which was incorporated in the Charter Reform initiative which was adopted by the voters in 1999. Thus, I'm keenly vested in the importance and role of the state's newly formed Independent Redistricting Commission. I wrote a letter in support of an unsuccessful candidate to the commission.

Comments:

I fully endorse the significance and importance of the redistricting concept, 'Community of Interest'. One of the abuses of the past system was arbitrarily changing districts to suit political parties and not communities. This is a harmful practice that requires reforms.

Relatively cohesive districts links neighbors, neighborhoods and communities, which often have common social, political and public policy goals and objectives, irrespective of political party. They are also, often based on historic socio-demographic patterns, which change only gradually.

The significance of the historic Voting Rights Act of 1964 should also be of significant importance to the Commissions deliberations. Insuring that minority communities political integrity remains an essential public policy goal. In numerous prior redistricting proposals, from both parties, minority voting rights have been denied, blunted and/or unnecessarily diluted. The Commission should make adherence to this Act a major policy objective.

The Commission also has the opportunity to END the excessive and excesses of Gerrymandering which has characterized the redistricting process in California. Both parties have blatantly gerrymandered districts and communities, solely to defend a few incumbents, no matter the cost to the concept of Community of Interest and cohesive political boundaries. Hopefully, the commission will pay particular attention in avoiding this type of district map configurations.

Conversely, in major metropolitan regions, strict adherence of existing political jurisdictions (ie., city boundaries) is extremely problematic. The state has experienced dramatic demographic transformations in the past forty years. Many existing political boundaries are limiting in terms of actual communities of interest and ethnic composition of communities. These problems are as follows:

1. Boundaries were established decades ago, a majority prior to 1950.
2. The state has substantially changed demographically, thus, dated boundaries simply do not reflect significant ethnic and demographic differences in relation to what constitutes a community of interest.
3. The state has experienced an era of unprecedented ethnic demographic transformation, especially in Southern California. This has essentially changed the concept of 'community of interest' in many zones, cities, political jurisdictions, and state political boundaries. The Commission has to reassess how this demographic change influences what constitute commonalities within newly changing communities.
4. Community synergies often cross city and/or county boundaries established decades ago. For instance, the border between South East Los Angeles County and North Orange County were established when there existing a minimal urban population. Now this area is heavily urbanized, with distinct communities of interest crisscrossing this political boundary. A similar pattern exists between Pomona and West San Bernardino County. The Inland Empire initially was mainly in agricultural uses, and is now almost totally urbanized. Thus, communities of interest, now exist irrespective of political boundaries.
5. The Commission needs to recognize that flexibility is essential for continual demographic changes and the meaning of community of interest in the future. District boundaries should reflect existing demographic realities, with some ability to acknowledge changes which will occur within the next decade.
6. The issue of population patterns, which have recently reflected a movement from intense urban core zones, may not be sustained. In fact, given long term historical trends, and the need for denser urban patterns, this population shift may in fact, reverse itself in the future. Smart growth principles have the potential to revisit increased population patterns in urban centers in the near future.

Challenges:

- A. Vigilance toward insuring political rights for ethnic minorities in relation to the Voting Rights Act.
- B. Flexibility in relation to the concept of 'Community of Interest', in major metropolitan regions in which dated political boundaries are inadequate in reflecting the demographic changes in this state in the past twenty years.

C. There remains a real integrity to develop cohesive, socio-demographic districts that are reflective of the new California populace.

D. The Commission needs to plan for future demographic dynamics of the state's minority population growth rates during the next decade.

In the role of senior consultant, responsible for drafting the successful provision for an independent Redistricting Commission for the City of Los Angeles, I appreciate your focus, integrity and objectivity in relation to the demands and conflicts inherent in the redistricting process. This is an historic commission, with significant power, responsibilities and tasks. The entire state, especially minority communities keenly anticipate the political maps for the state assembly, state senate and US congress that the commission will be developing in the near future.

Respectfully,



Dr. David R. Diaz

Director

Urban Studies Program

CSU Los Angeles



Region #4: Los Angeles
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MAY 2 2011

Melissa Scribner

#14

West Hills CA 91307-1743

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May 19, 2011

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Via Email - ~~votersfirstact@cfc.ca.gov~~

Post-It® Fax Note	7671	Date	5-20-11	# of pages	1
To	California Citizens'	From	Melissa Scribner		
Cur/Dep't	Redistricting Com.	Co.			
Phone #		Phone #	[Redacted]		
Fax #	916-322-0907 916-651-5711	Fax #			

To: California Citizens' Redistricting Commission

Re: Los Angeles/San Fernando Valley

Dear Commissioners:

Short and sweet: Please reverse the Benihana-style butchering of the San Fernando Valley (a valley in the City of Los Angeles, north of downtown). Our "Valley" (in excess of 2 million people) has a commonality of interests, which will be better served and better represented by its being reunited.

By returning our representation and voice, perhaps the out migration of frustrated Californians can be slowed. This appears to be our last hope.

Thank you for your service.

Melissa Scribner

Melissa Scribner
West Hills, CA

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