

May 13, 2011

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

Subject: Redistricting, Santa Clarita Valley Area, Elected Official Input

I am an elected official with the Newhall County Water District, located in the Santa Clarita Valley. This letter constitutes my personal opinion only and does not represent any position by our agency. I offer my title only as means of background, and our District has not considered an agenda item on this matter. I wanted to express my support for redistricting the Santa Clarita Valley area, and for redistricting in general.

The local paper has reported that you have received a lot of pleas for the Santa Clarita Valley to remain in one assembly district. As a local elected official, I have worked with our multiple senators on water issues and have not found working with multiple elected representatives to be a problem. If anything, having multiple voices in Sacramento who can understand our area's issues is an advantage. I believe Santa Clarita, like most of the state, will be well served by redistricting and the plea for to keep us in one assembly district is not a major concern except for the current majority party and those who operate within it.

Redistricting will achieve more balance in both local and statewide elections, and likely attract more open minded candidates. I have participated in various elections since 2003, both in our area and outside of it. Elected officials generally do not need to work with those of the alternate party to win office. Political parties heavily participate in local, non-partisan elections. Centrist candidates typically have a hard time getting through regional endorsement hearings, even at the local, non-partisan officeholder level. For example, in the City of Santa Clarita, our entire City Council are republicans, and of the more than 37 City Council, Water Board and School District officeholders in our valley, I am aware of only 3 who are democrats. I believe the input you have received so far is by only republicans. I have been told by their party representatives they wanted to ensure the local offices stayed primarily republican to make them an easy feeder for statewide office and, in fact, the influence the long-anticipated redistricting process.

On balance, I have seen some less than stellar candidates in all-democratic areas receive endorsements and easily win office over far more qualified challengers. This has proven extremely harmful on issues like statewide water policy and infrastructure. Our statewide republican representatives have been very good on water policy but are overshadowed by anti-infrastructure views of the majority party. More balanced and receptive officeholders across the state will benefit everyone.

By making offices more competitive, your commission will broaden the pool of candidates that seek and achieve both local and statewide office. The citizens of the state and our local cities, schools, and water districts will be better served by officeholders who need to do more than appeal their majority political party activists to get re-elected.

Thank you for your service on the commission and the receptiveness to public comment.

Sincerely,



Maria Gutzeit  
Board Vice President  
Director, Newhall County Water District, 2003 - present  
*speaking on my own behalf only*  
Santa Clarita Valley resident, Engineer, and Business Owner

[REDACTED]  
Newhall, CA 91321