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**Subject:**Redistricting NW California

**Date:**Mon, 23 May 2011 19:32:47 -0700

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These are my comments to the Redistricting Board.

Northern California has three major north/south routes: U.S. 395 on the east, U.S. 5 in the middle, and U.S. 101 on the west.

These three hiways roughly define major zones of interest for Northern California.

Hiway 101 runs through Sonoma County, Mendocino County, Humboldt County, and Del Norte County. Each of these is a coastal county with long stretches of coastline and economic similarities. They naturally fit together under the current Assembly, Senate, and Congressional districts because of their shared concerns.

It has been suggested that districts be rearranged on an East/West basis, putting Humboldt County in with Shasta County, among others. This is a BAD idea. Humboldt County has few common concerns with Shasta County. The simple problem of geography would make such a district extremely difficult to manage. It is a long mountainous route over Hiway 299 or Hiway 36 to get from one to the other. In the winter it is sometimes impossible to make the trip. Humboldt has issues including salmon restoration, Klamath and Trinity water, and the development of the Marine Highway (Short Sea Shipping) that do not concern the inland areas. Likewise, Shasta County (Redding) has issues including population pressure, agriculture, and the Sacramento River which do not directly effect the coast.

Aligning Mendocino or Sonoma Counties with Central Valley counties is also a BAD idea. Valley counties are primarily agricultural while Coastal counties are much less so. For example, coastal counties look at water for fisheries while Valley counties see water as irrigation. This is a HUGE difference right there.

Trinity County on the North is sort of in the middle between the Valley and the Coast. It is allied with the coast over Klamath and Trinity River issues and is a major vacation destination for coastal residents seeking sunshine. Likewise Lake County to the south which sports a large body of water (Clear Lake) and is more closely connected to Hiway 101 than the distant Hiway 5. Both of these counties have been traditionally aligned with the coast, mostly because of water interests and other resource issues. It makes good sense to keep it that way.

My request is that the Board thoroughly familiarize itself with the geography of Northwestern California. Then use both geography and shared interest (coastal issues) when drawing district lines. Try not to seek change for its own sake. If you redraw districts, do it for good reasons. Ask the people in those districts if there are reasons either for or against realignment. Don't try to "mate" the coast with the valley. It has nothing to do with political parties and everything to do with the type of issues and interests that must be dealt with by any representative. Don't try to unnaturally glue the Salmon to the Rice crop. They might work great on the plate but not when trying to learn, understand, and represent their interests.

To summarize, please, keep the coastal counties together on the Northcoast. Counties like Lake County and Trinity County are very small but have enough common interests that they logically belong with the Coast. We on the Northcoast have, over time, elected representatives from both parties. We do not need to be divided to try to provide some imaginary political balance.

I appreciate your considering my views. Please at least learn the cities and counties of the Northcoast. Learn their geography and politics. Learn their differing economic interests. That will make your job easier and is the only way a fair and reasonable districting can be achieved.

Thank you and good luck.  
Tom Peters

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