

Sierra Gold Products

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Region 9: El
Dorado

My name is Richard Barb.

May 19, 2011

I am a resident, business owner and contractor in Placerville in El Dorado County.

I've come to ask the Commission to adhere as closely as possible to the guidelines put forward in the law for the reapportioning of voter districts.

The culture and economy of El Dorado County is mostly rural in nature and as such is much more closely tied with counties along the Highway 49 corridor such as Amador, Calaveras and some parts of Placer.

Although we have much business that travels east and west from Sacramento and to the Lake Tahoe region, Sacramento County has virtually no communities of interest that are similar to us in any way. Our desire is to preserve our way of life by being allowed to elect legislative representatives that will identify with and understand the specific needs of our region; therefore, I respectfully request that our Senate and Assembly districts not divide our county, and that we not be incorporated into an Assembly district with neighboring Sacramento or Placer Counties.

El Dorado, Sacramento and Placer counties face challenges with very different needs and demands.

In our situation, county lines make very obvious, logical boundaries.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Barb

Richard Barb
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SPEAKER 31

██████████, Placerville, CA 95667

Region 9: El Dorado

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A Mountain Redistricting Plan: Conserving a Rural Quality of Life

By Don Nicodemus

Cameron Park, El Dorado County

May 17, 2011

Speaker #5
May 19, 2011

We ask the Citizen Redistricting Commission to do the following:

- 1) support a mountain redistricting plan which protects a community of interest that is made up of rural towns, forests, and widely dispersed housing,
- 2) separate suburbs into different districts from this rural mountain community of interest,
- 3) keep coastal areas in coastal districts, valley areas in valley districts, and mountain areas in mountain districts.

Small towns and rural residences like Chico, Oroville, Auburn, Grass Valley, Truckee, Placerville, and South Lake Tahoe are part of one geographically large, low density, widely dispersed community of interest. Mountain residences and some urban communities have a common interest in conserving the rural nature of this community, but many suburbs have a different attitude toward conservation. Environmental resources are at stake.

This wide-spread Sierra community of interest wants to conserve the rural land, forests, and parks here in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and foothills. This community exists in counties like El Dorado, Alpine, Mono, Nevada, Butte, in eastern Placer County (Auburn, Truckee, etc.). This community is concerned about rural quality of life. Majorities in some of these counties have actually passed smart growth ideas like "Measure Y" in El Dorado County, but local ballot measures to keep counties rural, protect Lake Tahoe, or save Mono Lake are **limited when suburban developers pick our representatives.**

There are economic and social ties that bind the community together. Tourism, forestry, and agricultural crops like wine grapes and apples are an important part of the economy. Water resources and watersheds are important to this community and to urban communities that claim water rights here. Please don't split up this community simply because part of the community is in same county as a large suburb.

Separate Suburbs and Rural Mountain Areas

Suburban land use and other policies are often antagonistic to the quality of life sought after by most rural residents of these mountain communities. Many urban planners know that there are economic and social problems created when new suburban communities grow next to traditional rural areas, but it can be just as bad to draw districts that allow suburban areas to divide up and dilute the power of the rural mountain community.

Districts can be drawn here in a way that promotes conservation, environmentally friendly tourism, and local agriculture OR districts can be drawn that promote runaway suburban development at the expense of rural land and water.

Rural Mountain Community vs. Compactness

Preserving rural communities of interests is more important in the law than compactness. The Mountain Redistricting Plan creates districts of nearly equal size, respects the voting rights act, encourages nesting, but see the rural community of interest as more important than keeping every county in one and only one district. As legal scholars have informed us – county boundaries are not necessarily determinative. The Mountain Redistricting Plan supports nesting of Assembly districts in State Senate districts that support rural conservation. Some compact districts do result, but compactness is not a priority greater than community of interest.

Conclusion

The Citizens Redistricting Commission should be thanked for taking testimony here in Auburn to hear directly from mountain and foothill residents. Most members of the Citizen Redistricting Commission have little idea of what it's like to be a resident of a smaller mountain community. So, it's great to see the Commission taking testimony here.

It is more important to not divide this community, that is interested in Sierra conservation, than it is to have undivided counties. Put **Auburn, Chico, Grass Valley, Nevada City, Oroville, Placerville, Truckee, and South Lake Tahoe** in one Assembly district are very different from communities like Rocklin and Roseville. These **west Placer County suburbs need to be together with other suburbs like Folsom, Orangevale, Citrus Heights, and Lincoln**. Other parts of Sacramento are more supportive of conservation. **El Dorado Hills is more like Rancho Cordova and Elk Grove** than it is like Placerville and should be together in another Assembly district.

Included below is a proposed Assembly map of the Sacramento Region that is part of the Mountain Redistricting Plan. Details of this plan will be submitted electronically to the Commission next week.

Some Badly Drawn Mountain Districts in 2001

Consider two districts drawn in California in 2001 -- Assembly District 4 and Congressional District 4 which include the Tahoe Basin. California districts were drawn in 2001 by politicians in the State Senate and Assembly to protect incumbents in both major parties. AD4 and CD4 were designed to protect suburban incumbents so naturally they were drawn to include strongholds of suburban power in western Placer County like the cities of Rocklin and Roseville, but they divided the conservation community of interest in Sierra counties. The districts disempowered local people who seek smart growth and environmental conservation of their rural quality of life.

While there are some great people that live in western Placer County, the politics there tend to be dominated by vested, development interests. These interests even imported one of the most corporate politicians from southern California to run for Congress when the incumbent had to step down due to corruption.

Consider the proposed Auburn Dam that these developer interests want to be build on an earthquake fault -- not a smart development; it may be supported by the current and former Congressman and by some Rocklinites but not by the majority of people who live in the town of Auburn itself. The point is the way you draw the district determines representation and the use of resources. We should be concerned about the thoughtless cutting up of watersheds and rural land upon which local communities depend. How do we protect Lake Tahoe, the American River basin, its floodplains in Sacramento County, and even EDC farmland from suburban sprawl? Draw districts that support rural conservation and elected leadership will support it as well.

Protect Coastal Mountain Communities Too

Other mountain communities of interest exist on the coast and around Yosemite National Park, but those are different communities. Lake Tahoe and Yosemite National Park are the center of two districts in the Mountain Redistricting Plan that are not dominated by suburban areas.

Coastal mountain range communities need protection too, but they are not the same type of community as the Sierra Nevada Mountain community of interest. The weather and quality of life is different. They should be kept separate from central valley and inland, mountain communities where possible. The Mountain Redistricting Plan for drawing Assembly, State Senate, and Congressional lines in California takes environmental, social, environmental factors into account to help conserve watersheds for all of California. It doesn't just divide up the mountains as an afterthought and tack mountain areas that are small slices of a rural community onto the nearest suburb.

