
Subject: Redistricting from a Northwestern (Coastal) Californian Perspective

Date: Thursday, May 19, 2011 2:36 PM

From: [REDACTED]

To: <[REDACTED]>

Cc: <[REDACTED]> <[REDACTED]>

Conversation: Redistricting from a Northwestern (Coastal) Californian Perspective

Dear Commissioners:

Please allow me to affirm and expand upon the views expressed in the letter you have received from Jane Person, President, League of Women Voters of Mendocino County.

Residents of the Northern California coastal counties, from the Highway 101 corridor to the Pacific Ocean, and from Sonoma County to the Oregon border, share a passion for preserving the beautiful coastal setting that brought many of us here. Logging and commercial fishing, formerly foundational to our economy, are now primarily part of our colorful history. The primary commercial interests that sustain us are the tourist industry and specialty agriculture, with strong emphases on organic growing and sustainability. As older, traditional commercial activities have declined, these counties have become significant retirement destinations.

Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma and Trinity Counties are all predominantly rural and relatively sparsely populated. Along with neighboring Lake, Napa, and Yolo Counties, their citizens travel primarily along our major North - South corridor, Highway 101. A close second North - South route for coastal residents is Highway 1. For most coastal residents, travel between Highways 1 and 101 means well over an hour of driving time. East - West travel is severely limited during winter months and is challenging for many Northwestern California citizens all year. A significant percentage of these citizens are over age 65 and are either retired or semi-retired. While the over - 65 population of our state as a whole is under 11.4 percent of the total population, citizens over age 65 comprise an average of 15 percent of the total populations of Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, and Trinity Counties. Driving at night along the narrow, curving highways and secondary roads that connect these citizens with major North - South corridors east of Highway 101 is either impossible or extremely challenging. Yet it is these citizens who are often the most active, as volunteer contributors to their communities and as participants in the political process.

For all the reasons stated above, I urge you to draw the boundaries of our Assembly district so that Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, Trinity, Lake, Napa, and Yolo Counties are kept in the same district, and to the greatest extent possible, the same is held true for State Senate and U.S. Congressional districts. Effective, responsive government requires good communication between our elected representatives and their constituents. Despite the plethora of electronic and other means of communication now available to us, nothing compares with the power of persuasion a face to face meeting

provides.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share these thoughts with you.

Sincerely,

JoAn Blackstone

[REDACTED]

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