

Region 6 - Kern
June 26

----- Original Message -----

Subject:redistricting suggestions affecting kern county

Date:Sun, 26 Jun 2011 13:32:40 -0700

From:roy malahowski [REDACTED]

To:[REDACTED]

Mostly I think the Commission has done a commendable job with its first draft, including the districts that include Kern County. But I have these suggestions for improvements.

I start with the draft congressional districts for which some of the comments apply to the assembly district as well.

(1) I think that small area in Fresno County, consisting as best I can tell from the map primarily of the Squaw Valley area (not to be confused with the ski resort of that name) should be removed from the "Tulare" district (something of a misnomer as about 75% of its population is in Kern County) and placed in the "Fresno" district. This area can be reached through Tulare County but has little relation to that county and is more an exurban area of Fresno more directly accessed through Sanger. Also it cuts down on the perhaps-inevitable dissection of Fresno County.

The excess population that adds to the "Fresno" district can probably be best removed by subtracting perhaps an area around Woodlake or Strathmore and adding it to the primarily agrarian and Latino "Kings" district. This of course will give the Kings district an excess population.

The excess added to the "Kings" district can be compensated by transferring a part of the "Kings" district to the "Tulare" district, which compensates that district for the loss of the Squaw Valley area of Fresno County. The most suitable candidate area is that area of Metro Bakersfield in Census Tracts 29 (which is where the Valley Plaza Mall is located), 31.13 and 31.15 in that descending order until the population balance has been reached. The reason for this I explain below.

(2) I recognize the apparent need to remove from Metro Bakersfield a certain part of the southeast area to address the concerns a number of Latino residents of that area for linking that low income area with the heavily Latino, relatively low-income population of the agricultural communities in western Kern County. However I think Census Tracts 29, 31.13, and 31.15 are the least characteristic areas in that "community of interest". These are basically middle class parts of Metro Bakersfield that are west of H Street, which in this part of town forms a more authentic dividing line between the low income areas of southeast Bakersfield than Highway 99 does.

On the other hand, I think Census Tract 20 definitely should be included as a part of this "community of interest". That tract is a corner cut from the detailed map of the "Kings" congressional district (and as best I can tell from the "Kings" assembly district as well. But this is a predominately Latino tract and most of the rest of the population in that tract is black. It is a low-income area. It has been linked to a number of other tracts

(most notably Census Tracts 15, 21, 22 and 25) for numerous economic development and enterprise zone plans in Bakersfield as part of that integral area. All of those other tracts are in the "Kings" congressional and assembly districts in the draft maps. On the other hand, Tracts 29, 31.13, and 31.15 have never been considered for any redevelopment or enterprise zone purposes and I do not believe any of them meet the criteria for Community Development Block Grant consideration as "low income" or "blighted" areas--which Tract 20 certainly *does* meet. I suggest this revision in both the congressional and assembly "Kings" districts.

If it ultimately matters, I would say Census Tract 9.04 would be next behind 29, 31.13 and 31.15 for transfer from the "Kings" congressional district to the "Tulare" district. However I suspect you won't have to go so far.

(3) Viewed in the context of other districts, I understand your decision to include a portion of Lancaster and Quartz Hill in the "Tulare" district. But given the fully understandable desire of residents of keeping Lancaster and Palmdale together, I think you should revisit this part of the draft district. I can see where moving Lancaster entirely outside the "Tulare" district would create something like bumper cars--at least I couldn't see a global solution to this one. However, I think that if you reconfigured the Los Angeles County portion of this district, you could minimize the split of Lancaster. I would suggest that you first attempt to fit all the high desert communities *outside* Lancaster-Palmdale into the "Tulare" district. This would include such places as Lake Los Angeles, Littlerock, Pearblossom, Leona Valley, Lake Hughes, Neenach and Gorman in the "Tulare" rather than the "Antelope Valley - Santa Clarita" district. They appear to fit about equally well, or equally adequately, in either district, but doing it this way would reduce the portion of Lancaster separated from Palmdale by half or more to the area woven around Quartz Hill. At least it is worth considering.

(4) The one area that I felt should be different but am now inclined to agree with the Commission's first draft is leaving the "hook" made up by southeast Bakersfield in the Kings district while including West Kern (basically Taft and Maricopa) in the "Tulare" district. It does give the district a more gerrymandered look than is desirable. But if some of this is about public input, I think the design meets that test on both sides. I suspect the majority in Taft and Maricopa would rather be linked to the "Tulare" district, anchored by Metro Bakersfield, than in the much more agrarian and Latino "Kings" district. The Metro Bakersfield portion of the hook is thus left, with only the details mattering. I have already commented on that.

With respect to the assembly districts the comments are similar to those for the congressional district as to Tracts 20, 29, 31.13 and 31.15. The details of the map appeared a little different bt from the draft maps, I couldn't tell exactly where the differences were and can't comment further.

As to the state senate districts, I am confused because the Kern-Tulare district seems to include a large area in Fresno that isn't in either assembly district. The Fresno assembly districts seem entirely to have disappeared. Was there an oversight? I thought the senate districts were each to nest two assembly districts but that doesn't seem to be the case. In any event, I thought the assembly districts for the area made more sense than the senate districts did. I hope you can clarify all this in the next draft.