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Subject:TESTIMONY

Date:Wed, 22 Jun 2011 00:50:28 -0400

From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

June 21, 2011

Dear Members of the CA. Citizens Redistricting Commission:

Thank you, thank you, thank you. I feel like I have been heard. I previously submitted written testimony requesting the inclusion of the City of Watsonville in the same Senate District as the City of Salinas. The draft Commission map of Senate District 15 is such a strong improvement of what exists today. I encourage you to keep Watsonville and Salinas in the same Senate District.

Watsonville is located at the southern most area of Santa Cruz County. Currently Senate District 15 includes the city of San José which is in the Silicon Valley. Watsonville has absolutely no community of interests with the Silicon Valley which is technology based. Watsonville's employment is primarily in agriculture. We have 55,000 acres devoted to agriculture and timber. The majority of residents are farm workers, who speak Spanish, and are low-income. The schools the children attend are Program Improvement schools as defined by No Child Left Behind. The families often do not have insurance and get medical care from a free medical clinic. These characteristics are specific to the characteristics of Salinas' residents. Salinas also is agriculture based with a similar farm worker population with needs in education and healthcare as described for Watsonville. Watsonville and Salinas have the same community of interests.

Additional community of interests which are more general are that Salinas and Watsonville are in the same water district. Salinas and Watsonville are both represented on the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government (AMBAG). And Salinas and Watsonville are in the same media market. The radio and television stations for Salinas are also heard and viewed in Watsonville.

Watsonville and Salinas share community of interests. Legislatively, we can address issues of farm labor, education, and health care. In the same Senate District we can support each other in making decisions for the betterment of both communities. Please keep Watsonville in the same Senate District as Salinas.

I would like to add that as I review other redistricting maps I find that the Commission has failed to increase the opportunity for Latinos to progress politically in the state. As you know since the last Census, California's Latino population has accounted for 90% of the state's growth. However, the Commission's maps do not reflect that growth and in fact diminish Latino's ability for political representation. In your deliberations, please do address this very serious omission. I would like other Latinos in the state to have the same level of voter strength that I will have in my Assembly, Senate, and Congressional districts.

Respectfully,

Rebecca J. García, Chair

Watsonville City Redistricting Committee
Trustee, Cabrillo Community College
