



via email/

June 27, 2011

California Citizens Redistricting Commission
901 P Street, Suite 154A
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Redistricting of the 7th Congressional District

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce - representing major 400 businesses, we are very concerned by the first draft of the New Congressional Districts Line Maps, and support the City of Richmond Council Resolution (passed on June 21, 2011) to request that the California Citizen's Redistricting Commission keep the City of Richmond in the Contra Costa County Congressional District 7.

Of concern by many of the residents and small businesses are opportunities for input were not well publicized within the City. Another issue is that those who did wish to attend public meetings could not because they were held in San Francisco and not in Richmond or Contra Costa County. We recommend that the future meetings be held in the City of Richmond as many of the meetings required commuting to areas outside the means of many Richmond residents. This is a reasonable request given that the proposal will substantially impact the City by splitting it.

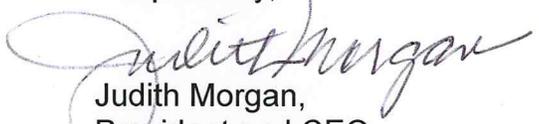
Given the first draft of redistricting maps for Congressional, State Assembly, State Senate and Board of Equalization districts, the new maps move the majority of the City of Richmond from the current District 7 - away from inland Contra Costa County, and, suggest alignment with East Bay communities of Berkeley, Oakland, Emeryville and Alameda. We foresee several issues with this action:

- Our most important issue, is the proposed Congressional redistricting would split the City of Richmond down the middle with the west half going to what is now Congressperson Barbara Lee's 9th District and the eastern half being moved to what is now Congressman John Garamendi's 10th District. Neither of these district representatives has worked with the City of Richmond and are not intimately aware of the unique issues facing our City.

- Berkeley, Oakland, Emeryville and Alameda are all currently in Alameda County with only Richmond in Contra Costa County. Richmond would then be split between the competing goals of two separate Counties.
- Unique to the City of Richmond is the Rosie the Riveter National Parks Center. The “park” is not located in one area of Richmond but covers key historical sites throughout the City. Dividing the City in half will impact representation of these valuable historical resources between two separate districts.
- The Commission should also be aware of the impact on health services should the City be split. Doctor’s Hospital provides health services to Richmond residents not enrolled in Kaiser Hospital HMO, many of which are uninsured. As a result other hospitals in the county and current district help defray Doctor’s Hospital operating costs. Should the City be split, this could be an issue since the assisting hospitals would fall under Congressman Miller’s area not Congressperson’s Lee or Garamendi. Should Doctor’s Hospital falter, many of our uninsured residents may not have local emergency care and the burden would fall under Kaiser Hospital in Richmond. In addition, currently Richmond is part of the Contra Costa County Health Department, and if split it would be split between that and the Alameda County Health Services. This would create time and funding roadblocks in trying to address health services issues for the City.
- Redistricting would also impact our schools. Richmond currently falls within the West Contra Costa School District. Splitting Richmond would also split the representation and it only makes sense that Richmond and the School district be represented by the same legislative or Congressional district.
- The redistricting does not engage the economic impact that this will have on the City of Richmond in regards to competition for state and federal funding and other projects, e.g. Lawrence Berkeley National Labs expansion project for which Richmond is in direct competition with the Cities of Berkeley, Oakland, Emeryville and Alameda.
- Regarding the “Community of Interest”, the City of Richmond has an industrial and port base which is more in alignment with that of Crockett, Benicia and Martinez than the larger container port of Oakland.
- The redistricting guidelines call for the Commission to respect County and City

Again to enforce the fact that we are - in support of the City of Richmond’s Resolution and on behalf of our all of Chamber membership – we request that you keep the City of Richmond in the Contra Costa County Congressional District 7.

Respectfully,


 Judith Morgan,
 President and CEO
 Richmond Chamber of Commerce
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 Richmond CA 94805