

Subject: Preserve the Santa Monica Mountain Legislative Districts

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Mon, 27 Jun 2011 11:31:38 -0700

To: [REDACTED]

CC: [REDACTED]

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing in disapproval of the proposed Senate and Congressional legislative districts for the Santa Monica Mountain Region. The proposed legislative districts for our region severely break up our strongly tied communities.

The communities of West Hills, Hidden Hills, Calabasas, Agoura Hills, Westlake Village, Malibu, and the adjacent unincorporated communities are deeply connected through collaboration and services. These communities form the Las Virgenes - Malibu Council of Governments. The COG is the core of Los Angeles County's Disaster Management Area B. These communities collaborate in the Santa Monica Mountains Fire Safe Alliance. The inland communities are served by a single Sheriff's Station, located in Calabasas. These communities are served by three Fire Stations, located in Agoura Hills, Calabasas, and Westlake Village. The Las Virgenes Municipal Water District provides these communities with water and sewer services. The communities are also united through the distinguished Las Virgenes Unified School District.

Our strength as an interactive and collaborative community of interest rests on our ability to have a shared legislative voice. Our shared interest in preserving the ecology and beauty of the Santa Monica Mountains region is but one of the many elements that binds us together. Please respect the integrity of our communities and our quality of life by restoring the legislative integrity of our region. In this, I support the redrawn maps presented on June 22 to the Commission by the Las Virgenes Homeowner's Federation in regards to the Senate and Congressional districts for the Santa Monica Mountain Region, and posted online at <http://crcssmm.com>.

With best regards,

Debbie Tong-Trompeter

[REDACTED]
Topanga, CA 90290

Subject: Preserve the Santa Monica Mountain Legislative Districts

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Mon, 27 Jun 2011 11:05:29 -0700

To: [REDACTED]

CC: [REDACTED]

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

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With best regards,

Jack Trompeter

[REDACTED]
Topanga, CA 90290

Subject: Preserve the Santa Monica Mountain Legislative Districts

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Mon, 27 Jun 2011 18:45:03 -0700

To: [REDACTED]

CC: [REDACTED]

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

I am writing in disapproval of the proposed Senate and Congressional legislative districts for the Santa Monica Mountain Region. The proposed legislative districts for our region severely break up our strongly tied communities.

The communities of West Hills, Hidden Hills, Calabasas, Agoura Hills, Westlake Village, Malibu, and the adjacent unincorporated communities are deeply connected through collaboration and services. These communities form the Las Virgenes - Malibu Council of Governments. The COG is the core of Los Angeles County's Disaster Management Area B. These communities collaborate in the Santa Monica Mountains Fire Safe Alliance. The inland communities are served by a single Sheriff's Station, located in Calabasas. These communities are served by three Fire Stations, located in Agoura Hills, Calabasas, and Westlake Village. The Las Virgenes Municipal Water District provides these communities with water and sewer services. The communities are also united through the distinguished Las Virgenes Unified School District.

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With best regards,

Jody Thomas

[REDACTED]
Topanga, CA 90290

Subject: Preserve the Santa Monica Mountain Legislative Districts

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Mon, 27 Jun 2011 10:27:38 -0700

To: [REDACTED]

CC: [REDACTED]

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With best regards,

Nancy Rothenberg

[REDACTED]
Calabasas, CA 91302



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Clark Stevens

June 27, 2011

Via Electronic Mail to:

Citizen's Redistricting Commission
1130 K Street Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95815

RE: Redistricting of Senate and Assembly Districts

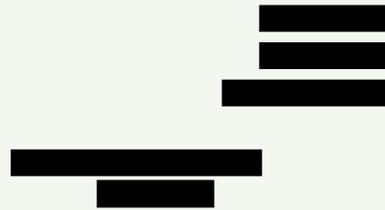
Dear Members of the Citizens Redistricting Commission:

For 50 years, the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM), a legal subdivision of the State of California, has been a non-regulatory reviewing and resource agency in the Santa Monica Mountains and Upper Los Angeles River watersheds. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input related to the proposed re-districting of the State of California, and have over the last half-century identified a number of important "Communities of Interest" that bind the Santa Monica Mountains Watersheds in a single, local community of interest.

Having reviewed the draft maps for proposed redistricting of our region, **we again ask that the communities of the Santa Monica Mountains, those in both Los Angeles and Ventura County and their watersheds flowing into the Santa Monica Bay and Pacific Ocean, as well as the adjacent watersheds of the Simi Hills and upper Los Angeles River system, be represented to the greatest extent possible in unified representational districts.**

While we recognize the challenges the commission faces in addressing the multiple factors involved in developing appropriate representative districts, the initial draft maps propose significant additional fragmentation of this defining southern California community of interest. Overall, the proposed new districts would be far more effective by mapping the districts to Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area-related watershed boundaries and incorporating the cities of the Las Virgenes-Malibu Council of Governments that interface geographically with SMMNRA. That would set the framework for management efficiencies via an ecosystem-approach to political redistricting of the COI. **The current maps increase, rather than decrease, the fragmentation of a COI that has taken years to develop and is recognized nationwide as a model of coordinated resource management collaboration.**

We include again below the full text of our original letter, preceded by specific comments on the draft maps, and a new **map of the Santa Monica Mountains**



Community of Interest:

Assembly-

The Santa Monica Mountains COI, currently represented largely by a single assembly district, would as proposed in the draft maps be fragmented into several new districts, and the critical wildlife corridor from the 118 through the upper Los Angeles River watersheds to the main body of the Santa Monicas would be represented by three different assembly districts, which would make coordinated action on behalf of that corridor exceedingly difficult. **Again, we urge the commission to maintain the integrity of the Santa Monica Mountains Community of Interest.**

Senate-

In addition to dividing the SMMCOI in half along its east-west extent, and separating the upper Malibu watersheds from their termination at the coast, the proposed map also divides the Topanga Creek Watershed in half, dividing the Los Angeles County Unincorporated area in the west from the City of Los Angeles areas to the east. Such a division of a single watershed and one of its most recognizable communities is particularly problematic. We ask the commission to consider incorporating more of the SMMCOI in a single district, to allow for the completion of the upper SMM watersheds through Malibu, and at to **maintain the integrity of the Topanga Creek Watershed, which contains Federally Endangered Species and so is in critical need of intact representation.**

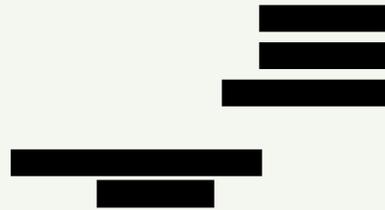
Congress-

From a resource, transportation and social perspective, the community of Malibu and its watersheds share far more in common with the SMMCOI communities in the east and northern reaches of the SMM watersheds than with that of the Oxnard Plain and Agricultural landscapes of Ventura County. **Again, we urge the commission to maintain the integrity of the Santa Monica Mountains Community of Interest.**

Please review again the basis for our definition of the Santa Monica Mountains Community of Interest as provided in the text of our original letter below:

The Santa Monica Mountains local community of interest is bounded by:

- The Conejo Grade/Thousand Oaks of Ventura County in the northwest
- Point Mugu of Ventura County in the southwest
- The Pacific and Santa Monica Bay coastline, Malibu and Santa Monica in the south-southeast
- The Upper Los Angeles River watershed side of the Santa Susanna Pass, Chatsworth and Bell Canyon Communities in the north, and



- Extends along the spine of Mulholland Drive, north to the 101 Freeway, as far to the east as Runyon Canyon, West Hollywood.

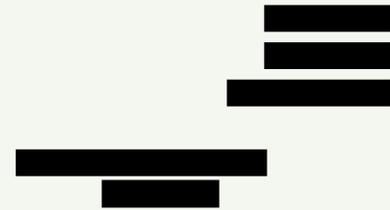
The municipalities and wholly contained unincorporated communities of the Santa Monica Mountains include: Thousand Oaks, Hidden Valley, and Deer Creek, Yerba Buena and Bell Canyons (all of Ventura county); and Westlake Village, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, West Hills, Woodland Hills, Encino, Sherman Oaks, Monte Nido, Cornell, Malibu Lake, Malibu, Topanga, Pacific Palisades, Santa Monica, Bel Air, Beverly Glen, Westwood, and the Canyon Areas of Beverly Hills and West Hollywood in Los Angeles County. All of these communities of interest link natural and human communities with one another in a manner unique to mountain watersheds, and have multiple common resource interests, including:

Watersheds- Watershed boundaries are real geographic features that directly impact the movement of water and wildlife, and inform the underpinning of local ecology. Watersheds in this way create the underlying community of interest for both human and non-human residents. Municipal jurisdictional boundaries that misalign with watershed boundaries set the stage for numerous management conflicts that can be avoided by keeping watersheds as intact as possible within the political process.

Water Quality- From a practical and watershed perspective, what happens upstream affects what happens downstream. From a regulatory framework, the impacts of inter-mountain communities and their responsibility for both point and non-point pollution is shared throughout watersheds. Water quality is a tremendous concern in the Santa Monica Mountains, as it is throughout the state. Providing political entities that are responsible for the whole of a river or creek system, rather than fragmenting it, is both practical and positive.

Urban Wildland Interface Wildfire Management- The Santa Monica Mountains define the edge of dense urban development in the San Fernando Valley and along the coast, and include numerous communities and neighborhoods within the mountains themselves. Many municipalities, such as Malibu and Calabasas in Los Angeles County, Westlake Village (with contiguous development straddling both Los Angeles and Ventura Counties) and Thousand Oaks of Ventura County, cover both wildland in the upper reaches of their watersheds, and adjacent valley areas in the lower reaches. The interface with natural areas defines a number of shared interests, foremost among them wildfire management. For communities residing within the mountains, balancing the management of seasonal wildfire threat with the conservation of scenic, recreational, and wildlife values is a common concern.

Transportation Corridors- While some see the Santa Monica Mountains as a division between the San Fernando Valley and the coast, in fact, the through-mountain roads, as well as the creeks and rivers, provide critical connections that create a community of interest on both sides of the mountains. Thousands of daily commuters rely upon



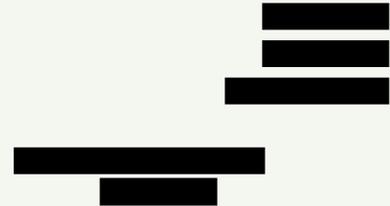
the 101 and 10 freeways, Kanan Rd, Malibu Canyon Rd, and Topanga Canyon Blvd, in the west, as well as the 405, Sepulveda, Laurel Canyon and Coldwater Canyon Roads in the central portion of the mountains to get to and from their homes and work. In addition, these corridors also provide wildlife linkages used by everything from fish to mountain lions. Incorporating these transportation corridors into a single political unit facilitates and focuses scarce resources most effectively.

Scenic and Recreational Resources- As the hub of recreation for a densely populated urban area, the Santa Monica Mountains are a critical resource for a region that expands well beyond its immediate boundaries. Millions of visitors from near and far utilize the Mountains and its watersheds from the Upper Los Angeles River watersheds on the north and east, to the Pacific and Santa Monica Bay watersheds on the south and west. From a recreational perspective, the flow of people whose quality of life is sustained by the mountains and beaches follows its watersheds.

Wildlife Habitat- The Santa Monica Mountains is home to numerous rare flora and fauna that both benefit and are threatened by watershed-based influences. Invasive species must be managed from a whole-watershed perspective, as weeds in particular will reseed downstream if sources upstream are not managed. Connectivity at the regional scale is also critical. The Mountains' apex predator, the Mountain Lion, relies entirely on linked and fragile watershed connections from the Santa Monica Bay and Pacific Ocean on the south, through the upper Los Angeles watersheds of the Simi Hills to source populations in the Los Padres National Forest. If this community of interest- which includes human residents who value such complete ecosystems- were not maintained, the genetic health of this animal would not be sustainable within the Santa Monica Mountains

Again, such vital and life-sustaining linkages do not limit themselves to County and municipal boundaries. Shared interests in this region have led to the creation of numerous cooperative agreements and administrative overlays, including the Malibu-Las Virgenes Council of Governments, and most notably, the critical open space network of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, managed by the National Park Service in cooperation with California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy/Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. The RCDSMM is the fourth element of this regional natural resource community of interest that stretches from Ventura County's Point Mugu in the west and Santa Susanna Pass in the north, to Los Angeles County's Santa Monica in the south and Runyon Canyon in the east, and is uniquely chartered to work with private owners within these watersheds on a voluntary basis. In recognition of this two-county community of interest, the RCDSMM was recently funded by a three-year grant from the State Department of Conservation to organize the Santa Monica Mountains Watersheds Council.

To date, the collection of watersheds that define the communities of interest described



above and shown in the attached map has benefited by a relatively un-fragmented overlay of state-level representation. Currently, the Santa Monica Mountains area of interest described herein is represented primarily by State Senate districts 23 and Assembly district 41, but also includes portions of Senate Districts 17, 19, 20, and 21, and Assembly Districts 37, 40, and 42. Future redistricting should seek to keep the communities of the greater Santa Monica Mountains area and their associated watersheds whole within single representational districts to the greatest extent possible. Adhering to the following principles when defining representative districts would maintain or enhance the connectivity of interests that is critical to the health and vitality of our communities:

1. Emphasize continuity of watershed form and habitat linkages. The mountainous portions of the westernmost and southernmost upper Los Angeles River watershed- the so-called "Rim of the Valley" areas- should be grouped in a single community of interest with the coastal areas that drain from the Santa Monica Mountains. The Pacific coastal canyons of southeast Ventura County, for instance, have more in common with those of Malibu in Los Angeles County than the adjacent, largely agricultural, Oxnard Plain or the west-draining and more arid Simi Valley.
2. Identify and work with existing land management overlays so that the communities of interest they represent are kept intact. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area represents such an administrative overlay.
3. Understand and respect that large and connected areas of open space, although not in and of themselves sources of significant populations, bind significant adjacent populations in a strong community of interest, and so fragmentation of these areas and communities should be avoided.

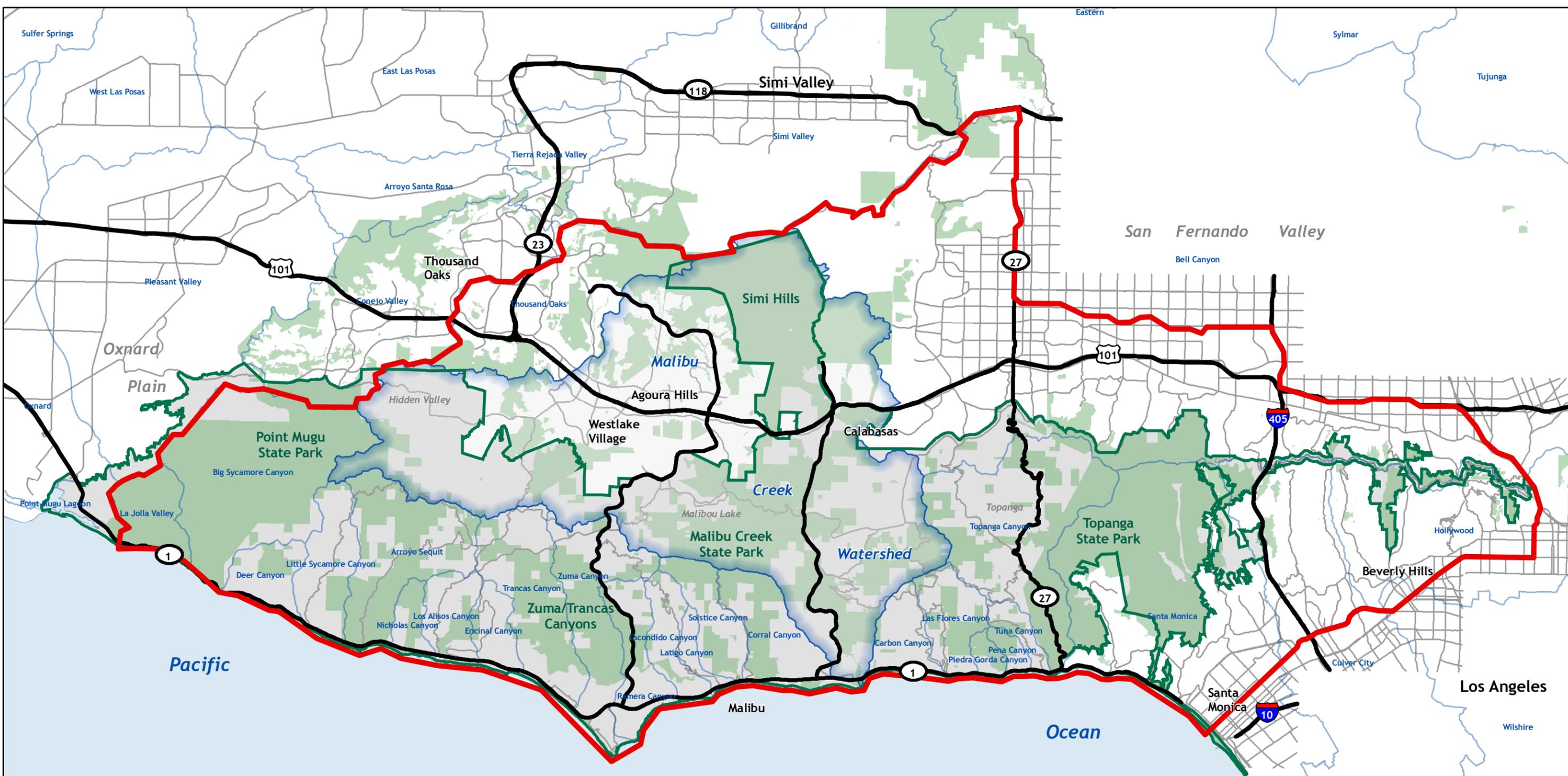
Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments in this early stage of the redistricting process. We look forward to participating as the work progresses. Should you have any questions regarding the content of this letter, or would like to more directly engage the RCDSMM, please feel free to contact me or our Senior Conservation Biologist, Rosi Dagit, using the contact information provided on this letter.

Respectfully submitted,

Clark Stevens
Executive Officer



cc: Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Director, Santa Monica Mountains
Conservancy
Woody Smeck, Superintendent, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation
Area



Santa Monica Mountains Community of Interest
Maintaining Watershed Integrity

- Santa Monica Mountains Community of Interest
- Malibu Creek Watershed
- Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
- Protected Lands

