

Subject: Comment letter re LA Senate Districts

From: John Given <[REDACTED]>

Date: Wed, 20 Jul 2011 12:53:19 -0700

To: [REDACTED]

Dear Commissioners:

Attached is my comment letter regarding proposed Los Angeles Senate districts currently proposed for public comment by your commission.

Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Given

CRC letter 7-20-11.pdf

JOHN P. GIVEN

Los Angeles, CA 90049

July 20, 2011

VIA E-MAIL TO [REDACTED]

Citizens Redistricting Commission

[REDACTED]
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Current Draft Senate Districts for Los Angeles

Dear Commissioners:

I have followed recent developments of the proposed Senate districts in the west side area of Los Angeles with some dismay. The process by which the commission has provided maps for public comment has been extremely confusing. Even as I draft this letter I am unsure whether there is a particular map being proposed, or merely several options that are receiving consideration. Nonetheless, I will attempt to respond to what I believe is presently suggested and identify the shortcomings with regard to the various communities of interest to which I belong.

I live in the Brentwood neighborhood of Los Angeles on the south slope of the Santa Monica Mountains. Earlier this week, Senate district maps were available on the commission's website¹ that would have split the local community of interest in which I live, known as Mandeville Canyon. Mandeville Canyon is comprised of approximately 1200 homes, and community members share its major features: a one-way in, one-way out access to the canyon and our homes; issues with regard to open space and wildlife preservation; fire safety issues (virtually the entire canyon is within a Los Angeles County designated "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone"); and, of course, location within the Santa Monica Mountains.

With the Santa Monica Mountains as a common geographic border we share many similar issues with our neighbors to the west in Pacific Palisades and Malibu, as well as issues such as traffic patterns, with our neighbors in Santa Monica and the west side of Los Angeles, since our major roadways include the major east-west surface streets and the 10 freeway, the 405, and the Pacific Coast Highway. In addition, we share hillside-related issues with communities all along both the north and south slopes of the Santa Monica Mountains, such as hillside stability, fire safety, flood control, and other issues.

With all of those commonalities, it was quite surprising to find that I might be served by the same Senator as people who live in Simi Valley, with whom I share very little in common, while people who lived literally a stone's throw away to the east side of Mandeville Canyon would reside in a different Senate district.

¹ I don't know the precise district designations because they were not labeled on the Google Earth "KMZ" file, but the districts were part of the Senate Visualization "Equivalency and Shape Files" entitled "July 14, 2011 Working Drafts – Los Angeles: Option One."

That district map is still listed as a working draft on the commissions website, but now seems to have been superseded by two more recent visualizations.² While both of the July 17 maps are vastly superior to the July 14 working draft, they are not without their own issues. For example, coastal Malibu would now be included as part of my district, but Pacific Palisades would be inexplicably and nonsensically eliminated from the district. I posit that the community of Pacific Palisades shares a lot more with its neighbors to the east and west, than does the Palos Verdes peninsula and environs with any of the Los Angeles west side neighborhoods north of LAX.


It would make much more sense to fashion a district comprised of all the hillside and surrounding communities based on the communities of interest and common issues discussed above. Such a district should include Malibu, Topanga, Pacific Palisades, Santa Monica, Brentwood, Encino, and Sherman Oaks, in an east-west configuration, and should not contain Rancho Palos Verdes, Torrance, or Redondo, and probably not El Segundo, also south of LAX.

I am aware of two suggestions that would also make more sense than Senate districts currently proposed by the commission. First, the Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation, Inc. (“LVHF”) provided a comment letter to your commission dated July 19, which proposes a district comprising Santa Monica, Malibu, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Westlake Village, Hidden Hills, Thousand Oaks, and the Los Angeles neighborhoods of Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, Topanga, Encino, Sherman Oaks, Tarzana, Woodland Hills, West Hills, Oak Park, and Bell Canyon. LVHF’s proposal deserves serious consideration by the commission as a very thoughtful response to the problem of identifying communities of common interest, and appears to fit well within the commission’s guidelines for Senate districts.

Second, it was suggested to me that a Senate district comprised of two assembly districts,³ but with slightly more of the San Fernando Valley west of the 405 Freeway than LVHF’s proposal, would also be a worthy start to a Santa Monica Mountain-oriented Senate district. Although the population would be not quite large enough for a Senate district, it seems close enough that only minor adjustments would be needed. I believe this suggestion deserves further study.

Based on all of the above, I urge the commission to: (1) maintain my neighborhood community of interest, the Mandeville Canyon area of Brentwood in any maps, whether Senate, Assembly, or otherwise; and, (2) craft a Senate district comprised of the hillside communities identified above, whether using the LVHF proposal or something similar that does not divide this important area of common interest.

Sincerely

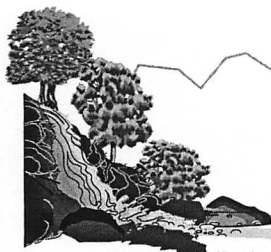
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Given', with a stylized, flowing script.

John Given

Attachments

² The new visualizations are labeled “2011-07-17 05:00PM senate la option 1” and “2011-07-17 05:00PM senate la option 2”.

³ The two districts are labeled “LAMWS” and “LAVSF” and are part of visualization “2011-07-17 03:40PM assembly la.”



Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation, Inc.

Agoura Hills, California 91301



"The voice and conscience of the Santa Monica Mountains since 1968"

Citizens Redistricting Commission

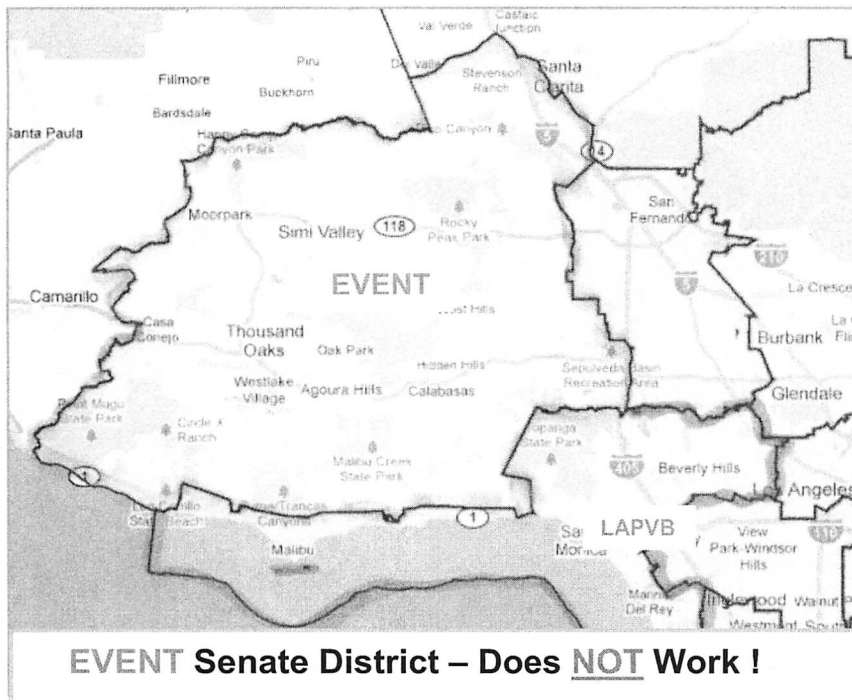
Sacramento, CA 95814

Tuesday, July 19, 2011

Honorable Commissioners:

On behalf of the Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation, in our 44th year as the largest, oldest, non-partisan voice of over 6000 homeowners and 25 homeowner associations in the Santa Monica Mountains:

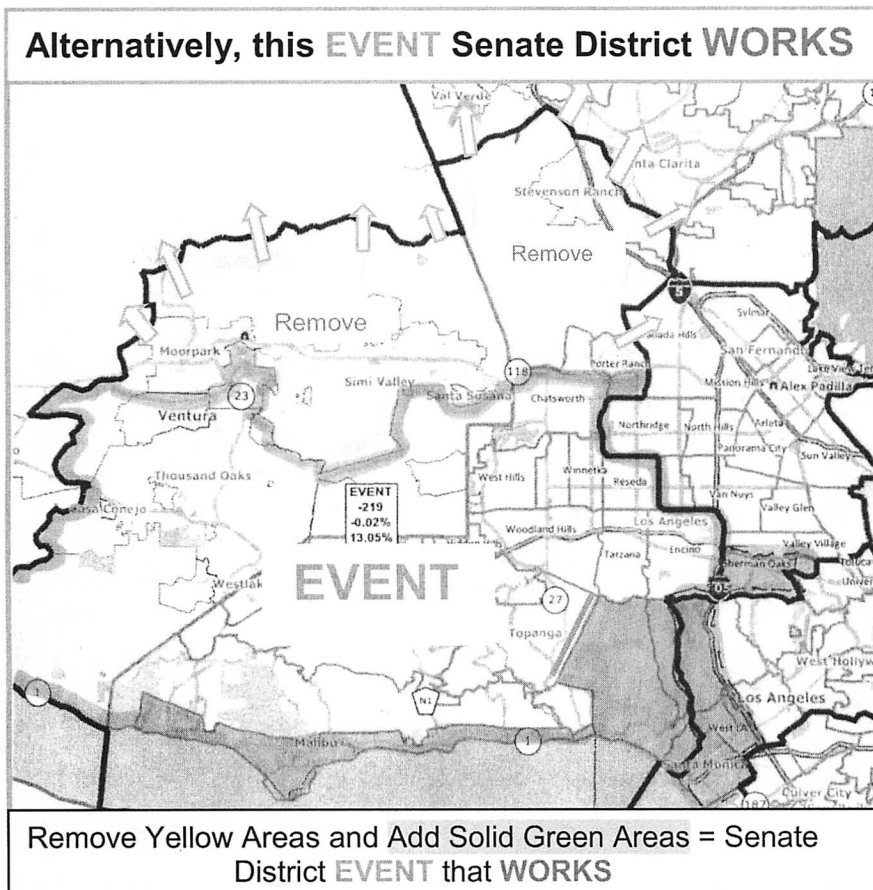
We strongly urge you to **re-draw** the lines of proposed Senate District **EVENT**. It is critically important because the current boundaries do **NOT** work as they combine two distinct and completely unrelated areas. *Simi Valley, Moorpark* and *Santa Clarita* are a north INLAND corridor and the **Santa Monica Mountain/Coastal communities** are a south **COASTAL** corridor.



The Santa Monica Mountain/Coastal communities of interest all lie east/west, not north/south which is why the northern communities of *Simi Valley, Moorpark*, and *Santa Clarita* do **not** share any communities of interest with us and that includes having no socio-economic links. The Santa Monica Mountains/Coastal

region interests' are **all** connected in an east-west pattern, not in a gerrymandered north-south line. The Santa Monica Mountains/Coastal areas should not be amalgamated into a Senate District with these northern inland communities because we are adjacent to numerous other neighboring populations **east and west** with whom we do share

communities of interest! We do not share any transportation/commute corridors either – the Santa Monica Mountain/Coastal region has the 405, 101 and the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) and the northern *Simi Valley*, *Moorpark* and *Santa Clarita* areas have the 118, 126 and Interstate 5. The current **EVENT** lines split up our COG cities and the SMMNRA.



Although, this is not our preferred map for the Santa Monica Mountains/Coastal region, it meets the Commission's criteria.

- Communities of interest are consistent and established between the cities, major transportation corridors, and the Santa Monica Mountains and Coast.

- These boundaries comply with the Constitution and Voting Rights Act. This **EVENT** District has better geographical compactness and integrity.
- It keeps all cities whole (Santa Monica, Malibu, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Westlake Village, Hidden Hills and Thousand Oaks) with the exception of LA. It also keeps all Neighborhood Councils as well as major communities whole - Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, Topanga, Encino, Sherman Oaks, Tarzana, Woodland Hills, West Hills, Oak Park, Bell Canyon. It keeps our school districts whole (except for City of LA which includes multiple senate districts). These are Oak Park, Conejo Valley, Las Virgenes Unified School District, Santa Monica/ Malibu USD.
- The population meets the threshold required by the 2010 census (932,061).

The Santa Monica Mountain/Coastal communities must be together in this east/west District that does not include the north inland areas of *Simi Valley*, *Moorpark*, and *Santa Clarita*!

Sincerely,
Kim Lamorie, President, LVHF

<http://swdb.berkeley.edu/gis/gis2011/>

Google

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California Citizens Redistrictin... Statewide Database | WebGIS | ...

District Type 2011-07-17 03:40PM assembly la

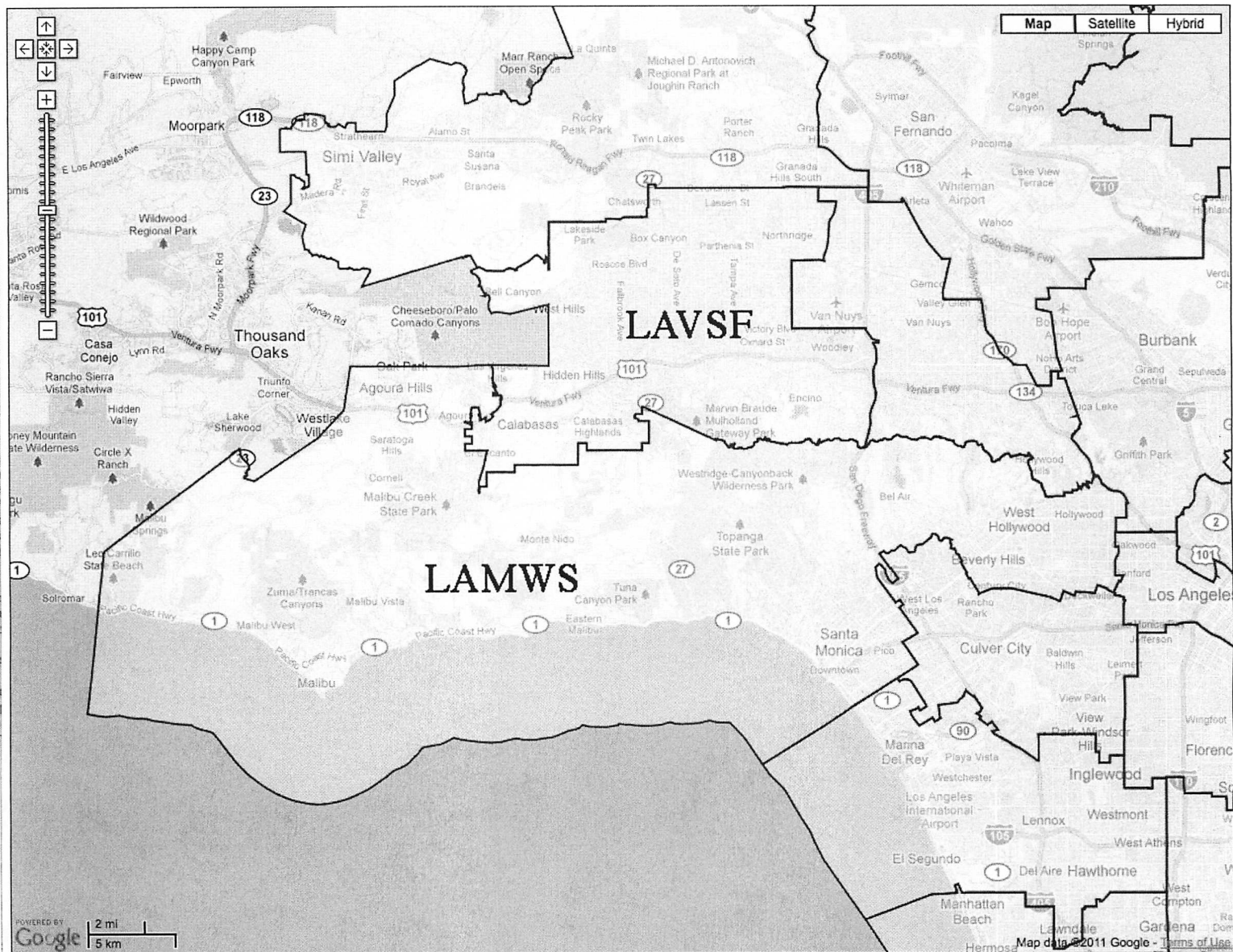
** current working visualizations **

** previously presented **

Locate an address within a district: 2850 Telegraph Ave, Berkeley, CA

Locate

Click on any district area to view its attributes.



Data Source: 2011 CRC Visualizations

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