

REGION 9: HUMBOLDT



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

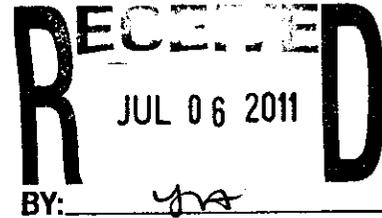
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

EUREKA, CALIFORNIA 95501-1153

June 28, 2011

Citizens Redistricting Commission

Sacramento, CA 95814



Dear Members of the Redistricting Commission,

I am writing on behalf of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors to urge you to reconsider your first draft maps so as to maintain two North Coast representatives in both Congress and the State Senate.

Our Board has repeatedly urged the Commission to keep Humboldt linked with other coastal counties through Congressional, State Senate and Assembly districts that recognize our unique, coastal character and protect our shared interests. From the draft maps, it appears that the Commission has heard that concern but has unfortunately addressed it in a manner that ultimately weakens our representation on those important coastal issues.

The North Coast from San Francisco Bay to the Oregon border is currently represented by two Assembly members, two Senators and two Members of Congress, giving our coastline two voices, and two votes, in each house. Under the Commission's proposal, that entire 400-mile stretch of coastline would be represented by only one Senator and one Member of Congress. Thus, our representation on important coastal and fisheries issues would be diminished by half.

The draft maps also appear to have given little consideration to numerous other issues raised in our previous comments. Dividing the wine country of Napa and Eastern Sonoma into a different district might weaken the strength of representation for our own burgeoning wineries and vineyards in Humboldt and neighboring Mendocino, and could impact other areas of specialty agriculture as well. This division would likely also have an impact on how our region is represented on important water issues, particularly in regard to the Eel River.

There is some concern that joining our Northern counties with Marin County and Southern Sonoma would shift both the geographic and population center of the district southward, creating the possibility that the "North end of the North Coast" might find itself fighting for attention with a power base that reflects more urban, Bay Area issues.

We also note the proposed addition of the Western portion of Siskiyou County into our coastal districts. While we take no issue with being joined with Siskiyou, we recognize that the residents of Siskiyou have expressed their strong opposition to having their small, rural population divided in such a way, and we support their wishes to remain a unified county as part of an inland district.

Lastly, we understand that at your June 16th meeting the Commission voted not to hold any public input hearings following the release of the second draft maps on July 12th. This news is extremely frustrating and disappointing, as our Board has made repeated requests that the Commission hold a hearing here on the North Coast, but have received no response of any kind.

The Commission's apparent single-minded focus on reaching out only to population centers, while ignoring the State's vast and diverse rural areas, creates doubt as to the legitimacy of the result. We strongly encourage the Commission to reconsider this decision, and we once again repeat our request that the Commission schedule a hearing here on the North Coast.

We thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Lovelace", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Lovelace, Chair
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

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