

**Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
Agenda Item Transmittal
Departmental – Afternoon Session**

From: Supervisor Mark Lovelace
Meeting Date: June 28, 2011
Time Required: 10 minutes

Contact for Information

Name: Kat Hayes
Telephone: 476-2396

Subject: Consider Input to the California Citizens' Redistricting Commission on its Draft Maps.

Summary: The Citizens' Redistricting Commission was established pursuant to Proposition 11, the Voters FIRST Act, which was approved by California voters in November 2008. Under the Act, the 14-member Commission was charged with drawing the district lines for the State Senate, Assembly, and Board of Equalization. In November 2010, voters approved Proposition 20 which gave the Citizens Redistricting Commission the additional responsibility of drawing new district boundaries for the State's Congressional delegation.

To the extent practicable, there are to be two complete Assembly districts "nested" within each Senate district and ten complete Senate districts together within each BOE district. In drawing district boundaries, the Commission was given specific criteria to consider. Districts must have reasonably-equal population, must protect the voting rights of minority communities under the federal Voting Rights Act, and must be drawn without regard to political incumbents and partisan considerations.

In addition, and to the extent possible, districts should be geographically compact, should reflect geographic and common sense boundaries, and should maintain the integrity of any individual city, county, neighborhood, or "community of interest" within a single district. The commission is responsible for defining "communities of interest" for its own purposes.

On June 10th, the Redistricting Commission released its first round of draft maps for Congressional, State Assembly, State Senate and Board of Equalization districts. The Commission is now soliciting public comment on these draft district maps. The maps show significant changes to the districts for the North Coast region:

- Assembly District 1 currently includes Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, Mendocino, Lake and part of Sonoma County. The Commission's proposal would add the Western part of Siskiyou County, including the communities of Happy Camp, Etna, and Fort Jones, but excluding cities and towns on the Highway 5 corridor. The Southern edge of the district appears to be largely the same, though the exact boundary around Santa Rosa is unclear.
- Senate District 2 currently includes Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, Napa and parts of Sonoma and Solano counties. The Commission's proposal would drop Napa and Solano counties, and would add Marin County and the remainder of Sonoma, other than the area around Santa Rosa, which would be carved off and joined with Napa, Solano and part of Yolo County. At the North end, the proposal would add Del Norte, Trinity and the Western part of Siskiyou County, as in the proposed Assembly district.
- Congressional District 1 currently includes Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, Napa and part of each Sonoma and Yolo Counties. The Commission's proposal would drop Napa and Yolo, and would add All of Marin County and the majority of Sonoma, again carving out the area around Santa Rosa to be joined with the district to the East. In the North, the proposal would add Trinity County and the Western part of Siskiyou.
- Board Of Equalization District 1 currently includes 20 mostly coastal and Bay Area counties stretching from Del Norte to part of Santa Barbara and extending inland to Yolo, Colusa and Trinity counties. The Commission's proposal would add Glen, Tehama, Shasta and Siskiyou, as well as the remainder of Santa Barbara County.

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 would appear that the Commission has heard that plea. However, the draft maps raise other potential concerns which the Board may wish to consider.

The North Coast from Marin to Del Norte 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 same length of coastline would be represented by only one Senator and one Member of Congress, though it would still have two Assembly members. Thus, our representation on important coastal and fisheries issues might be diminished.

Dividing the wine country of Napa and Eastern Sonoma into a different district might potentially have an impact on the strength of representation for our own local wineries and vineyards, and possibly on other forms of agriculture too. It might also effect how our region is represented on water issues, particularly in regard to the Eel River.

Inclusion of Marin County would shift both the geographic and population center of the districts Southward, potentially raising concerns that the "North end of the North Coast" might find itself fighting for attention with more urban, Bay Area issues. While this may indeed be a concern, it may also be seen as simply a trade for more-distant Solano and Yolo counties.

The Board may also wish to consider the possible impacts of adding Del Norte, Trinity and the Western part of Siskiyou County into our various districts.

The close of the Public Comment period for the 1st Draft Maps has been extended to Tuesday, June 28th (the day of this meeting). According to a press release on the Commission's website dated June 16th, the Commission plans to release their 2nd Draft Maps on July 12th. The press release also notes that the Commission "Voted not to hold any public input hearings following the release of second draft maps on July 12th, but will encourage submission of public testimony by e-mail, mail and fax." The Commission is scheduled to certify their final maps on August 15th.

It is recommended that the Board review the draft maps for the State Senate, Assembly, Board of Equalization and United States Congressional districts, take input from members of the public and direct the Chair to send a letter to the Citizens Redistricting Commission expressing the Board's support, opposition or concerns with the Commission's proposed maps.

The hearing schedule and the draft maps can be found at the Commission's website at www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov. Comments to the Commission may be submitted by mail, fax or e-mail at the addresses below:

Citizens Redistricting Commission
1130 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 322-0904
votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov.

Requested Action: Review the draft maps for the State Senate, Assembly, Board of Equalization and United States Congressional districts, take public input and direct the Chair to send a letter to the Citizens Redistricting Commission expressing the Board's support, opposition or concerns.



Signature

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

Upon motion of Supervisor
Supervisor

Seconded by

Ayes
Nays
Abstain
Absent

and carried by those members present, the Board hereby approves the recommended action contained in this Board report.

Dated: _____

By: _____

Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the Board

June 24, 2011

Citizens Redistricting Commission
1130 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 322-0904
votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov

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,

Mark Lovelace, Chair
Board of Supervisors
Humboldt County

Attachment

California Citizens' Redistricting Commission' Draft Maps

**The Citizens' Redistricting Commission's draft maps
for the North Coast region can be found at:**

<http://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/maps-first-drafts.html>

**Color copies of the maps will be available at the front counter
of the Board of Supervisors' office**

**825 5th Street, Rm 111
Eureka, CA 95501**