April 10, 2021

Dear Commissioners:

We would like to share with the Commission an update on the Legislature’s efforts to fulfill our mandate to ensure public access to redistricting software. We are pleased the Draw My CA Community Tool, developed through the hard work of the Statewide Database, has proven an early success. When first discussed three years ago, we never imagined how wholeheartedly it would be embraced by the Commission, and we share your hope it will prove a model for the rest of the country.

As we have noted before, the Legislature’s goal in meeting the mandate to ensure access is broader than the COI Tool. Members of the public need the ability to not only submit the boundaries of an individual community of interest, but also the boundaries of proposed districts, including full redistricting plans. In our January 25th letter, we discussed looking forward to updating the Commission on these additional efforts in the future.

Presentation of our update has been awaiting the completion of development of the COI Tool, including implementing Commission requests to modify and expand its scope. Now that the COI Tool is up and running, an update on additional public access may be timely.

As with your own work, strategies had to evolve this year due to changing public health and timeline mandates. Despite the uncertainty, the Legislature, in partnership with the Statewide Database, proceeded to plan to provide redistricting access centers in the state’s largest population centers at the same level as ten years ago, not knowing when or if health directives would allow them to open. We will have good progress to report.

In addition, steps are being taken to add additional options unavailable to the public ten years ago, particularly for communities that previously had few access opportunities. These include adding online redistricting software and downloadable redistricting software for installation both at home and in other publicly accessible locations.

We believe that the Legislature and the Statewide Database should be ready to provide an update later in May. We look forward to scheduling this update and continued coordinating with the Commission on these efforts.

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