

From: **Matt Woodrow**

Date: Wed, Apr 21, 2021 at 12:37 PM

Subject: Public Comment Submittal

Dear Redistricting Commission,

I have been watching your hearings intermittently with great interest – as a Californian with grandchildren whom I hope will grow up in a more governable, just society. I believe fairly drawn legislative districts are a significant element to achieve that goal, and I am rigorously rooting for your success.

Structurally, I support an independent commission without hesitation. The fact you must discuss and decide all things redistricting in a public hearing gives the public confidence that the process is free from political interference. With that said, I hope you will consider my modest suggestions to increase accessibility to your important process.

1. **Please Give Us More Details.** You reference many things in hearings without giving us – the public – the benefit of details. For example, during the Public Input hearing on 4/20/21, Commissioner Akutagawa and others referenced there are “setbacks” with your proposed grant program, but yet there was no detail provided about what those setbacks are. Speaking of your grants program, nothing since the initial outreach plan has been presented in writing, or during hearings in which I have listened to.
2. **Please Post Transcripts in a Timely Fashion.** I understand you are working on posting transcripts, but this discussion has occurred over several months without closure. Transcripts have still not been posted since summer of 2020 and it is untenable to watch hundreds of hours of video to catch up. I very much appreciate Commissioner Kennedy’s attention to this issue to date, and am hoping this can be accelerated. Please know that searching for keywords is much more efficient than trying to forward through a public hearing that does not always have a detailed public agenda as a guide.
3. **If You Can’t Post Transcripts Quickly, Can You Post Summaries of Key Action Items?** Can you please post summaries of your meetings – as you do for public input meetings – or can you live-tweet what you’re discussing? Perhaps we can follow your Twitter or other social media facets to better understand what we’ve missed? Social media posts are most effective when they give timely, relevant information that the public can engage with in a similar fashion. In the least, perhaps you can consider posting actions and votes taken. If transparency is truly the

cornerstone of this process, I hope you'll consider making more of your actions not only transparent, but accessible to the public. This way we, the public, can engage more meaningfully, and you, the commission, receive higher quality input.

4. **Please post documents with notification.** When you post documents or update documents on your website, can you please send an email to your distribution list? It is cumbersome to keep up with your numerous and lengthy hearings, and to know when documents are uploaded. If this will yield too many emails, perhaps, members of the public can sign up for a new distribution list that can keep them apprised of such postings.
5. **Please add a search button to your commission website so we can easily find documents based on keywords.** For example, where can we find your latest Outreach Plan that commissioner Ahmad was referring to in the Public Input session from 4/20/21? That is buried under a specific date under "handouts," something that is untenable for us to find as the general public. Also, there are many updated drafts, so conceivably, even if we found it, we would still have to continue our search to ensure we didn't have an outdated draft.
6. **Please add a tab to your website for "Important Commission-Approved Documents."** In the same vein, please consider adding a tab for important commission documents – such as Outreach Plans, budgets, etc.
7. **Rotating times are a start, but please bring more discipline to your meeting agendas.** Your public input subcommittee sessions happen at a very inopportune time for many of us – 4-7/8pm (and I have not yet seen an alternative, rotating time for this session). I live in a household that includes my children and grandchildren, and this is likely the worst time to engage meaningfully. It's homework time. It's dinner time. It's bath time and bedtime for the kids. I also commiserate with those who work the typical 9-5 hours, and understand the need to move meetings around – but I hope you'll consider tighter agendas that can really engage the public, not employing hour-long exercises in which the public could not follow or view legibly during the live session (i.e., Miro visioning tool). If you are trying to increase engagement amongst the public – please be more concrete in your agendas and discussions. I understand that you cannot be specific due to open meeting laws and the need to book dates in advance, but for many of us who are juggling multiple responsibilities, joining a commission hearing where commissioners must allot time to read documents is a waste of everyone's time. Please value public time to engage. We are all putting

other things on hold to find the time to attend your meetings. I say this with great respect and understanding as I, personally, moved in with my children to help them take care of their children as they have had to take on a second jobs that span day and night to make ends meet. I know well: there is never a convenient time. But succinctness, tightly run meetings, and clarity of discussion are always appreciated. If more time must occur between meetings because they yield higher quality discussions, then perhaps revisiting the frequency of meetings is worth questioning. Requiring commissions to share their thoughts in advance of meetings to allow for a more informed discussion not only increases transparency for the public, but I would believe, it would lead to better policies and decisions. And, on a most basic level, as the Public Input meeting sounded exasperated during its 4/20/21 discussion on comparing calendar availability during meetings - please find ways to share this information as pre-meeting materials so that hours of calendaring do not eat through valuable public discussion time. Thoughtful discussions guided by a plan better inform all, instead of talk without any background materials that have been read or digested. It also allows the public to better follow.

8. **Please let us know where you will publish submitted COIs.** In previous meetings, if I recall correctly, I understood that several communities of interest have been submitted to the commission, and that they will be posted. Has this been done, and where can the public find them? Commissioner Andersen keeps telling us, the public, that we should submit COIs as soon as possible, and so this would be a helpful process to better understand.

Lastly, while I believe the comment made by Commissioner Sinay about Bagley-Keene during the 4/14/21 public input meeting was made with good intentions, I do hope you will take your role in espousing transparency and accessibility with great responsibility as you embark on the critical months ahead.

Oversharing and over-communicating (but succinctly, clearly, and accessibly) is better than less. Sharing more in writing and giving the public to engage at hours that suit them, is a critical element in accessibility. You have shared numerous times, that giving a voice to the underrepresented is one of many important goals in this process. Please don't forget that many of us are struggling to find a new normal in this post-pandemic world, and that we are nervous to engage in large group sessions. We have young children in our homes who are not vaccinated. We have essential workers in our homes that

cannot afford to lose time off work. Even for those of us who are vaccinated, we are avoiding travel and get-togethers as news of variants continue to grow. Please remember these sensitivities as you formulate your next steps, and please find ways to build greater accessibility into your process.

With respect,

Matthew W.