To Members of the 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission

I write today in advance of the Commission meetings on June 21, 2021 meeting pertaining to Zone D and June 28, 2021 pertaining to Zone C. I urge the Commission to consider the unification of Yolo County and Solano County as you draw the lines.

I have been a resident of the City of Davis in Yolo County for 42 years. During that time, I have served as a School Board Trustee, City Councilmember and Mayor, and as a Yolo County Supervisor since 2011. I have first-hand experience and understanding that the daily lives and world view of the residents of Yolo and Solano County are intertwined in countless ways.

Yolo and Solano Counties share a rich agricultural industry and legacy and an ever evolving 21st century economy. These two counties are the home of the University of California at Davis, the world’s leading agricultural research university. The campus is located on the southwester corner of Yolo County, immediately adjacent to the City of Davis and near the Solano County community of Dixon. The campus is a major economic driver for both counties and has influenced generations of farmers on both sides of the county line. Yolo and Solano Counties together are an agriculture economy powerhouse. At each phase of our shared history since 1908, the UC Davis campus has spawned new intellectual engines of industry. Today the economic spinoffs from that research continue to link our communities through health and life sciences, seed science, advanced manufacturing, and tech giants. The footprint of these spinoffs includes companies such as Genentech in Vacaville, DMG Mori Manufacturing in Davis and Bayer Crop Sciences in West Sacramento.

These two counties also share a common environment and natural resources. For more than ten years, I have served as a Board member of the Yolo Solano Air Quality Management District. Our two counties share the same air basin; what happens in Solano affects Yolo and vice versa. In 2020, a wildfire struck our area. The LNU Complex fire raged through several counties, hitting Solano County communities of Pleasants Valley, English Hills and the Vacaville area extremely hard. That same fire crossed the county line demarcated by Putah Creek and attacked Yolo County areas near the City of Winters. Solano County Supervisor and I conducted a series of listening workshops to hear the experiences of our shared community. Residents of both counties participated actively in identifying common concerns and next steps. It was clear that our residents share a community of interest. Our response to the fire and its aftermath and our work to prevent and mitigate future similar events demonstrates the interconnectedness of our two counties and the common interests of our residents. Similarly, the two counties share a deep commonality of interest as partners in the stewardship and destiny of the Sacramento River Delta. The boundary between our two counties on the western part of the county is Putah Creek, a waterway that serves as the outflow of the manmade reservoir, Lake Berryessa. Putah Creek itself demonstrates the common history of the residents of our two counties with prominent roles for the Solano Water Agency, farmers in both counties, and habitat stewardship by the Putah Creek Council.

Yolo and Solano Counties link the Sacramento Capitol Region with the Bay Area. Our two counties host key transportation highway, rail, and port infrastructure linking our mega region and connecting our region to the world. This is a critical element of our shared identity. Interstate 80 is the spine of this area. I have served as a Board member of the six-county Sacramento Area Council of Governments since 2008 and the Yolo County Transportation District since 2015. In these capacities, I have come to realize how critical the management of highway infrastructure is to our area. Investment in the I-80 corridor, congestion management, reduction in vehicle miles travelled and greenhouse gas emissions are common interest for the residents of our two counties. For the past several years, I have been an active member of the Interstate 80 Corridor System Management Coordinating Committee working closely with colleagues from Yolo County and Solano County and Cal Trans Districts 3 and 4 to improve the I-80 corridor. Intercity rail is another key element that ties our region together. I serve as Chair of the Capitol Corridor JPA, the agency responsible for passenger
rail service from Auburn to San Jose. We are one. Finally, the two counties are at the heart of goods movement by ship from the central valley through the Bay Area and on to the world, with port facilities in West Sacramento and significant refining and shipping facilities in Benicia and Vallejo.

On every front, these two counties are interconnected. Our residents move freely across our county lines to live, work, study and recreate. We collaborate across all aspects of policy and industry. I urge the Commission to consider our shared community of interest in drawing the lines for representation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Don Saylor
Yolo County Supervisor
District 2 (City of Davis, City of Winters, UC Davis Campus, Southwestern Yolo County farm country)