Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to urge that YOLO COUNTY be treated as a single, unified community of interest and that the redistricting commission’s work maintain it within a single district for Congressional district lines as well as for state legislative district boundaries.

Yolo County is essentially a rural agricultural county, home to a renowned university with a strong commitment to agricultural research, three small, nearly equal in size cities, and several small towns. Many Yolo County residents were born in Yolo County or have lived here many years and identify as people from Yolo County. We share a common government in the Board of Supervisors. Social services and healthcare are county-based. Many nonprofits are county-based, too: Yolo County Food Bank; Empower Yolo; Yolo Interfaith Immigration Network, Indivisible Yolo, and Yolo County Children’s Alliance, for example. Valley Clean Energy is the clean energy supplier for most of the county; Davis, Woodland and a reclamation district joined together to form a Clean Water Agency to develop a new water supply in coordination with the Putah and Cache Creeks watersheds. These efforts reflect the fact that getting things done requires working in coordination at a county level, because of the rural nature of the county and no single city is large enough for these activities. Yolo County is a community of interest.

Having Yolo County’s geographic boundaries be coterminous with, or encompassed within, electoral districts is essential to promote its interests. We currently have the benefit of being mainly in Congressional District CA-03 and have benefitted from that arrangement. Our representative in Congress pays attention to Yolo County and understands our needs. The exclusion of a portion of Yolo County from CA-03 has deprived the people in that area of the appropriate representation because their representative’s attention is largely given to the large, urban areas of her district.

I’ve experienced the downside of being a resident of an area peripheral to an elected official’s district. My state senator’s staff did not listen to the substance of a comment I made but said that Yolo County was only 10% of the district, suggesting my comments were not worth attending to. My state assemblymember is well rooted in Yolo County, but has a district so widespread she has told me she spends lots of time travelling long distances.

A mainly rural county such as Yolo County needs to be unified in electoral districts to reflect it as a community of interest. Our efforts to persuade elected officials would be greatly weakened if the boundaries of Yolo County were not coterminous with or contained within the boundaries of the districts of our elected officials.

Please establish district boundaries in a way to keep Yolo County as a single community of interest with district boundaries of elected officials encompassing all of Yolo County without separating it.

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