Good afternoon: My name is Sandy Hogan, and I have lived in Mammoth Lakes for 26 years. Before I retired from the Forest Service, I served as Assistant Forest Supervisor, and later as the Special Projects Coordinator. I currently serve on the YARTS (Yosemite Area Regional Transit Service AAC-Advisory Committee Vice Chair); and also on the Eastern Sierra Land Trust Lands Committee.

As a result of experience gained in various positions, I became familiar with much of the Eastern Sierra, and particularly of the communities of Mammoth Lakes, June Lake, Lee Vining, and Crowley. In addition, I began my 30+ years with the Forest Service with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. Therefore, I consider my “community” to be the Eastern Sierra, and because of my long association with YARTS, also those Central Sierra communities serving Yosemite, such as Mariposa and Tuolumne counties, and other western mountain-top counties such as Tahoe, Placer, Nevada, El Dorado, and Amador.

After living 16 years in Lake Tahoe, I left the ES to serve as District Ranger on the Arrowhead District of the San Bernardino National Forest for almost 8 years. This is particularly noteworthy to me, as the communities of San Bernardino County are quite dissimilar from the rural and often remote communities of the counties under discussion. For this reason, I would ask that you drop San Bernardino County from consideration in the same district, as it is not a part of the Central Sierra region. Also, I would ask that the urban portions of counties in the San Joaquin Valley be removed for the same reason.

The Central Sierra Nevada region includes Inyo, Mono, Alpine, Amador, Tuolumne, Mariposa, Calaveras, and areas east of the ridge of the Sierra Nevada in Nevada, Placer and El Dorado Counties (including the Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee). This region includes many national forests, and national park gateway communities. While these geographic areas are largely remote, they have many shared interests and economies, primarily resulting from tourism employment from a vast number of recreational offerings such as ski areas, camping, lakes and boating, fishing, hiking and backpacking, and similar activities. Many of those small (and large) businesses are under permit from the FS or the Park Service. This region not only has Yosemite National Park, but Death Valley National Park, Manzanar National Historic Monument, Devils Postpile National Monument, Mount Whitney, and Bodie State Park. Our visitors include international, as well as those from Southern CA.

Our residents choose to live in remote, mountainous communities, dependent upon a tourism economy. We worry about access to health care, climate change, forest management and fire prevention, and transportation issues. For example, when Greyhound left us in 2002, there was no public transit north or south. I participated in planning for a new transit system, which was finally started in 2007, ESTA.

These counties need to be kept together because our remote areas are sparsely populated and we need to be able to combine our collective voices to make sure that our needs are addressed. In the winter, the passes are closed south of Hwy 89, 50 or 80, which means that Mono and Inyo counties are essentially cut off from the other counties. We need our governmental representatives to be based in our region, so that there is understanding and concern about those issues that are important to us.
Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sandy G. Hogan