

Dear California Citizens Redistricting Commission,

My name is Elizabeth S. Carlson and I am a resident of Lodi, CA. I am writing this letter to you to request that when you draw the Congressional and Legislative boundaries, you split San Joaquin County in an east/west direction, in which **Eastern San Joaquin County (to include the communities of Ripon, Escalon, Farmington, Linden, Peters, Collierville, Lockeford, Lodi, Woodbridge, and Acampo) is kept whole as a clear and cohesive community of interest with Stanislaus County.** I also ask the Western San Joaquin County communities of Tracy, Mountain House, Lathrop, and Stockton are represented by shared representation in separate districts from Stanislaus and Eastern San Joaquin County.

Although Eastern San Joaquin County remains largely agricultural, new communities in western San Joaquin County like Tracy Hills and Ellis (Tracy), River Islands (Lathrop), Weston Ranch (Stockton), and all of Mountain House have given western San Joaquin County a completely different character. These developments have focused their advertising on Bay Area residents, pricing out many long-time Valley residents. These communities have very different cultures and interests than in communities in Eastern San Joaquin County and Stanislaus County.

Below is a list of some of the interests that bind Eastern San Joaquin County with Stanislaus County as a community of interest and separate this community of interest from Western San Joaquin County.

Transportation

- Tracy, Lathrop, and Stockton, along with the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority, are pursuing a billion-dollar train between Stockton and the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station called Valley Link. These communities should be in the same district as the East Bay so that they have a better chance of receiving federal aid for that project to strengthen ties between these communities and decrease Western San Joaquin County's increasingly infamous traffic.
- Tracy, Lathrop, and Stockton also use their transportation systems such as I-5, SR-205, the Deep-Water Channel, and the UP and BNSF railroads to move raw goods and finished products to and from the Bay Area. The leaders in these communities are constantly working across county lines with providers and suppliers to move more goods through the Altamont Pass, through the Deep-Water Channel and Suisun Bay, and along the railroads paralleling SR-4 in Contra Costa County. In contrast, Eastern San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties forge connections with each other and the commercial center of Modesto, not the Bay Area.
- The cities of Escalon and Ripon each have one bus route in their communities. Both of those bus routes travel into Stanislaus County and throughout North Modesto.
- SR 99 serves as the primary freeway for Stanislaus County residents and for the communities of Ripon and Lodi as well as the primary thoroughfare for those who live in the unincorporated communities east of Stockton.

Conservation

- The Cities of Stockton, Tracy, and Lathrop are all within the Bay Delta Conservation Plan Boundary as Delta communities, along with the Contra Costa County cities of Antioch, Brentwood, Pittsburg, and Oakley. In contrast, Eastern San Joaquin County and Stanislaus County's interests do not lie in the preservation of the Delta, but rather in the grasslands, rivers, and preserves of the Central Valley's East Side.

Agriculture

- Eastern San Joaquin County and Stanislaus County both have huge nut crops that are vital to the local economy. Along with almonds, walnuts play a leading role in the agriculture industries within this area, which is the nation's most productive walnut-producing region. Like any crop, walnuts have their own needs and it's important to keep the walnut growers and workers in the Eastern San Joaquin communities of Waterford, Hughson, Oakdale, Escalon, Linden, Lockeford, and Farmington together for better representation of their unique interests.
- Dairies and their workers play an important role in life in Stanislaus County and the Eastern San Joaquin County communities of Escalon, Farmington, Linden, Lockeford, and Acampo (near Lodi), which share a reliance on this critical industry. The issues and concerns of dairies and dairy workers are not shared with Stockton, Lathrop, Mountain House, and Tracy, whose dairy industry has largely disappeared due to suburban development.

There are numerous other reasons to identify Eastern San Joaquin County and Stanislaus County as an obvious and cohesive community of interest that should be represented in shared districts, separate from Western San Joaquin County. From similar needs and challenges in managing waterflow from the Sierras to a dynamic wine industry that includes the wine Mecca of the San Joaquin Valley (Lodi) and the largest family-owned winery in the world (E&J Gallo), the shared interests of Stanislaus and Eastern San Joaquin County are clear and important. In conclusion, I urge you to consider our shared interests and distinctions from Western San Joaquin County when drawing districts.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth S. Carlson
Lodi, CA.

Please keep us in the Eastern San Joaquin & Stanislaus County district - We are NOT the Bay Area!