My name is Tess Albin-Smith. I will be referring to the North Coast. I currently serve on the City Council of Fort Bragg in Mendocino county, as well as many councils and committees with joint jurisdiction throughout the county of Mendocino.

Again I live in Fort Bragg is a community on the Mendocino Coast, about 3 hours north of San Francisco, and 5 hours south of the Oregon Border.

All our coastal communities are surrounded by redwoods forests and white water ocean. We are unique. We are the feeding ground for whales, anadromous fish such as salmon and steehead that spawn in our coastal rivers. We have fog in our summers, which the redwoods depend on, and from which the redwoods capture and re-supply our groundwater reservoirs.

Fort Bragg was historically a mill town with a thriving commercial fishing industry. And although our own local mills have changed owners and moved east, we still very much have logging and commercial fisheries industries up and down the coast.

Our North Coast counties include Del Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino County, who like us are more and more
dependent on a tourist economy. For example, my city of Fort Bragg currently derives 50% of its income from sales and hotel tax alone.

I know one of the criteria for redistricting is that districts should be comprised of a specific “community of interest.”

I think I speak for most of our coastal cities when I say we do not want to be cookie-cutter “any town” franchise USA. .. We want to be a destination RESpite from the city with its formula businesses, traffic congestion, high rises, heat, and smog.

And our coastal tourist economy has everything to do with our town histories; our white water ocean; our redwood forest environment; our clean air; and our cool climate. We are not like any other place in California. And that’s why tourists come and that’s how we survive.

So we need our elected representatives to live in our areas and to understand where we come from. While Del Norte, Humboldt, and Mendocino Counties are the most closely aligned in terms of economy history, and infrastructure issues such as broadband, hospitals, schools and job opportunities. And while we
all share a concern for sea level rise and what that means to our futures.

To a lesser extent our neighboring rural counties of Trinity, Napa, and Lake are also aligned. We share a similar rural economy and have similar infrastructure issues and small town feeling.

I would also add Marin and Sonoma Counties into the mix—although they are a rapidly growing business economy, they are still rural-based with many farms and ranches. We belong together.

We would NOT WANT you to include any of the Bay area cities in our district.

Why? For one thing any representative from these areas would not get our problems, understand our attitudes, or have the time to learn.

Someone representing SF or the East Bay would be 100% pre-occupied with Big City issues, healthcare, Homelessness, and serious racial/ethnic conflict and the like, which we have very little of.

Not to mention there is no easy way to get to our communities from the big cities because there is limited transportation--huge distances from airports and trains.
Thanks for what you do.

Tess Albin-Smith
Soroptimist / Symphony / City Council