Hello, my name is Catherine Balck and I have lived and worked in Del Norte County for 10 years. I work at Sutter Coast hospital where I am an ultrasound technologist, and I am here testifying before you in my capacity as the Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Del Norte Arts and Cultural Association also known as DNACA.

DNACA is the state local partner with the California Arts Council for the county of Del Norte. We have been in existence for over 40 years providing our Del Norte constituents a performance art series and supporting Art in Public Places in our local community. We also provide art education in our schools and art programs for veterans, incarcerated people, and Seniors.

We are closely aligned with other arts organizations in Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity Counties. We interact with these groups monthly discussing programing opportunities, fundraising issues, and other arts related matters. We currently receive grants from the Ink People and the Wild Rivers Foundation both who are located in Humboldt County.

Many of our performing artists use the North / South coastal 101 highway corridor to travel to our venues and to head to their next concert locations. We have vendors and attend workshops in the Humboldt area, and many of our concert attendees come from Humboldt areas like Arcata, McKinleyville, Eureka, Ferndale and Fortuna. We feel closely connected with our neighbors in Humboldt, Trinity, Lake, Mendocino, Sonoma and Marin counties. These areas have vibrant arts communities that support our work here in remote Del Norte County.
I feel strongly that continued association with these coastal communities is essential to the wellbeing of our county and our arts council. I’m sure that there are also art communities in the eastern part of our state, but due to the geographical reality of difficult windy roads that require a long drive through Oregon, we do not interact with these communities on a regular basis.

The coastal communities also share the impact of the highway 101 transportation issues, the last chance grade has been a problem for decades and our coastal neighbors share our concerns about keeping highway 101 open and functioning as the main transportation path though our common communities. When highway 101 has problems, the eastern counties are not impacted as their transportation hub is around highway 5. The eastern counties do not understand the impact of slides and road closures on our main thoroughfare.

I am asking that the commissioners continue to align Del Norte County with the coastal communities that we are linked with highway 101. We share many similar problems that are unique to the coast that are not related to the inland counties. Changing our district would negatively impact the arts community in Del Norte and we respectfully request that Del Norte continue to be in the coastal district as it is currently.

Sincerely,

Catherine Balck