California Citizens Redistricting Commission  
721 Capitol Mall, Suite 260  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Commissioner,

It is the mission of the Indian Wells Valley Economic Development Corporation (IWVEDC) to enhance the economic base and the quality of life in the IWV. The IWV is currently in California’s 23rd District. We would like to draw your attention to some factors we deem critically important to the successful execution of our mission and the future of our Valley.

The IWV is home of the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWD), the Navy’s premiere weapons laboratory and test center. The 23rd District is also home to Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB), NASA Armstrong, and the Mojave Space Port. These installations are the cornerstone of military research, development, and testing of new weapons systems for the defense of our Nation. The Mojave Space Port plays a predominant role in the development of space systems that are leading the way in commercial space access and tourism. These organizations are instrumental to the future economic viability of Kern County.

As you consider your work to draw new district boundaries in California please take note of the important role being played by the government aerospace activities in the east Kern region. Having all these organizations in one district has enabled their nurturing and subsequent mission expansions. The role of the government activities is significantly different than the role played by the defense industry just to the south. While it is industries job to develop new weapons systems, it is the government’s job to develop and demonstrate the underpinning technologies; and, to independently test these new systems to ensure they meet their specified military requirements. Both roles are critically important to our National security. The defense industry in the Palmdale/Lancaster area is in the 25th District. The IWVEDC thinks it is imperative to keep these two entities in separate districts since their missions and roles are properly established in constructive tension. Having them in one district would demand that representative support both sides risking the erosion of the intended relationship.

Industry has opportunity to use it resources to support candidates running for office. Whereas, laws rightly prohibit organizations like NAWCWD, EAFB and NASA Armstrong from such activity. It would be an unintentional but natural consequence for this dynamic to destabilize the relationships between the local defense industry and the government agencies. Consequently, the IWVEDC requests the Redistricting Commission seriously consider maintaining the separation in districts representing the defense laboratories/test centers and the defense industrial base in the eastern Sierra region.

Respectfully,

Scott M. O’Neil  
Executive Director  
Indian Wells Valley Economic Development Corporation