Redistricting and the San Bernardino National Forest

As a resident of Rancho Cucamonga for over 30 years, I would like to share my thoughts on the current plan for redrawing district lines as a result of the last census. My family and I have hiked, camped, fished and enjoyed spending time in the San Gabriel Mountains and in particular the Cucamonga Wilderness area which are a 30 minute drive away. These mountains have million of visitors a year, rivaling our great national parks, and for many Inland Valley residents, the mountains are their best chance to encounter nature. These foothill communities south of the San Gabriel Mountains: Upland, Rancho Cucamonga, Fontana, Highland and San Bernardino share many common traits. Trails leave the cities and enter the San Bernardino National Forest. This community of interest of foothills cities to the south of the San Gabriel Mountains should be in the same congressional districts as the public lands themselves. That way residents, who have a strong self-interest in how the forests are managed, will have a member of Congress who has the clout to put these views forward. Foothill communities need a member of Congress who can help obtain federal resources and influence the federal agency that manages the federal public land, the United States Forest Service. Foothill residents in the community of interest also need a member of congress who can keep their interests in mind when federal public policy issues are addressed in Congress that relate to the national forest and their management. The communities are powerfully united by fuels and wildfire management issues that will only grow more challenging with drought and climate change.

The foothill communities from Upland to San Bernardino share many common concerns about the management their federal public lands:

*Fire and fuels management and wildfire suppression.
*All have sections of high severity fire zones.
*Zoning and fire safe structures (hardened home design),
*Watershed management and flood control
*Recreational quality and availability
*Parking near trailheads
*Law enforcement
*They are highest propensity visitors to the forests according to Forest Service data.

They are united by:

*Historic ties to the forest
*Trails into the forest
*Home adjacent to the forest
*Ecology (chaparral ecosystem)
*Spatial Orientation to the forest, steepening slopes
*Weather,
Congressional District 8’s southwestern boundary runs along the southern border of the San Bernardino National Forest with the congressional district heading north. This leaves almost no one in the 8th interested in the future of this important section of national forest. People who live in Rancho Cucamonga, adjacent to the range, who do care are in another congressional district.

As you can see from the current map of CD 8 it encompasses most of the SBNF which includes Mt. Baldy and Lytle Creek whose service roads come from Upland and Fontana. Many of the access trails to the begin in these cities, including the Etiwanda Preserve whose trail access is from Rancho Cucamonga., which recently gained responsibility for and established a plan to manage, maintain and develop the “Etiwanda Heights Neighborhood and conservation Plan”. We maintain the Etiwanda Preserve and hiking, bridal and bike trails which run along the Southern boundary of the SBNF and are maintained by these cities. It’s only logical we who use these have the responsibility for them. Our fire districts respond to and assist the CDF in fire suppression and prevention for these areas and our Flood Control Districts are directly impacted by the run off from
the mountains. Our water districts, who utilize groundwater from the mountains, supply up to 30% of our drinking water. These issues alone constitute a need for this area to be included in CD31 instead of CD8 for effective management of this resource. Thank-you.

Sincerely: Mark T. Rush (resident of Rancho Cucamonga)