Good evening, Distinguished Commissioners,

The 2020 Census provides a snapshot of who we are as a nation, as a state, county and city levels. This data has been utilized since the founding of our nation. Our nation has evolved, over time, but we cannot overlook the ways in which we still have work to do. The most recent data has shown a need to redraw district boundaries across the state.

I have previously given my public comment during a Communities of Interest Forum for the Inland Empire where I addressed the need to keep the entirety of the Coachella Valley as one contiguous Assembly District where it is currently divided between AD42 and AD56, while being a part of a single Congressional District (36) and State Senate District (28). The majority of the callers who addressed the Coachella Valley stated that it should be merged to allow for better representation and an end to the “Us vs Them” that thrives when there is a competition for resources at any level. This also extends North and South, isolating residents of Joshua Tree and 29 Palms who work, shop and see their healthcare providers in the Coachella Valley. If possible, the district should be as far as Blythe as the communities along Interstate 10 share economic and environmental impacts of interstate travel and vehicular commerce. Environmental impacts make it imperative that the Coachella Valley have a part of the Salton Sea in the same district. Dividing the Salton Sea across two districts acknowledge the shared responsibility, impact and consequences to both Imperial and Riverside Counties. The Salton Sea must stay within one Congressional District as the federal support for this would require solid support. Separating it would be an ecological disaster which Southern California cannot afford as we are in danger of becoming a second Owens Lake Disaster.

During that public forum, I did not speak about Palm Desert, as I was awaiting the release of Census Data. Since 2010, Palm Desert has grown 5.6% in population size, and has also become more diverse. According to the tabulations from our local newspaper, The Desert Sun, there have been changes that warrant looking at our district boundaries again. In 2020, I became the first Latina elected to Palm Desert City Council. This was possible because I had to sue the City of Palm Desert to comply with CVRA. My Co-Plaintiff and I settled on a less than perfect model because we felt it was the easiest way to have people be engaged in the districting effort and would be a great first example so we could learn from it. My hope is that the new data will show that Palm Desert should completely end the electoral system from at large to district representation. At this time, District 1 in Palm Desert came together as a community of interest by demographic representation and proximity to the Civic Center. While campaigning and since taking office, I have heard from individuals who wish they were included in District 1 and those who wish their area had not separated from District 2 (at large). There is a grass roots organization, Drive For Five, working to engage residents and find a way to continue the effort for five equal districts, the way the other large cities in our desert have. Residents of Palm Springs, Cathedral City and Indio have five equal municipal voter districts. I humbly ask that the Redistricting Commission evaluate the unique situation in the City of Palm Desert.

Healthiest regards,

Karina Quintanilla